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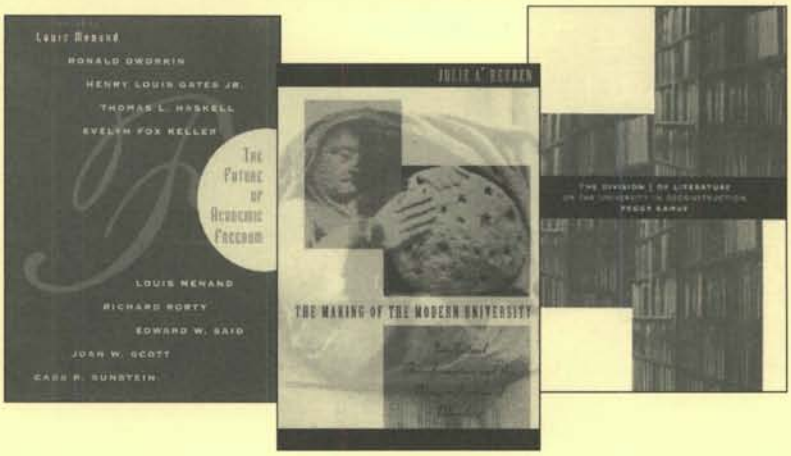

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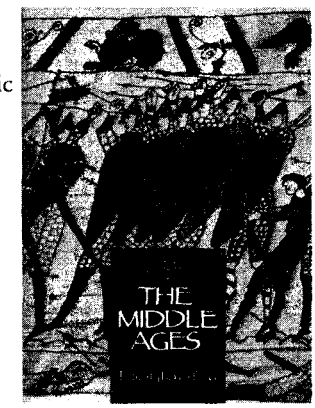

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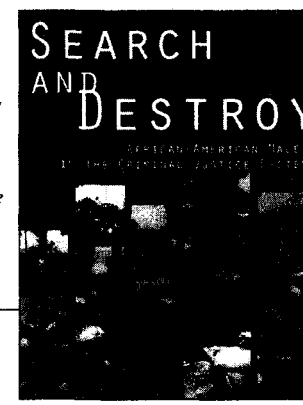

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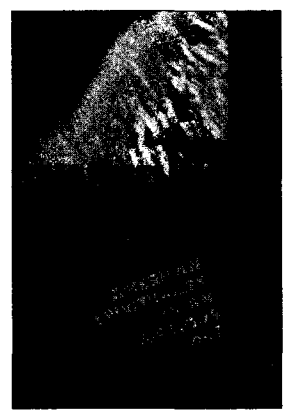

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Anglophilia, American Style

ARISTIDES

Anglophilia came to me almost as naturally as hemophilia to its unfortunate victims—it was, that is to say, in my blood. It began with my father, who was born a Canadian and thus into Dominion status and who had enormous admiration for the English. Along with stories from the Bible, his first readings to me were stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and of Robin Hood. So it was from the English, or at least in an English version, that I gained my first notions of honor and integrity and social justice. From the first, my heroes had English names and spoke in English accents.

The head of my mother's family was her mother, a widow and grand matriarch, who had come to America from Leeds. Although poor, she had somehow managed to have a Cockney maid, a woman with the extraordinary name of Minny Tumbletee. Rather late in life, Minnie Tumbletee married a man named Ted White, a retired sergeant in the British army who had many tattoos and a Cockney accent two stages beyond indecipherable. I have no memories of my grandmother, who died when I was three, but Minnie Tumbletee always told me that I was her favorite grandchild and that it was my grandmother's desire, somewhere along the way thwarted, that I be named Adrian; this would, I am sure, have made me a much better street fighter than I am today.

Still, I might never have become an Anglophile had I not been born in 1937, for my first, still strong, experience of history was World War II. This was the war that, in my mind, was won by the English, "the stolid English," who, in Primo Levi's words, "had not noticed that they had lost the game." Two years old when it began and eight when it ended, I then saw World War II, as I continue to see it today, as the good war, the war without moral equivocation, whose outcome was owed to English righteousness, endurance, and courage.

For an American boy growing up in the middlewest, World War II was fought at the movies. I fought it at the side of such gallant—and elegant—officers as Major Ronald Colman, Colonel Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Captain Noël Coward, Commander Cary Grant, and Lieu(actually Lef)tenant Errol Flynn. Even in American movies, the English officers always came off as the most suave, most intelligent, most heroic of fighters. A few months ago, I watched again the Noël Coward-David Lean film *In Which We Serve*, which, despite its obvious propagandistic intention, still moved me greatly—to something near tears, if the ghastly sentimental truth be known.

Only much later did I learn how much bravery was required of English civilians to endure the relentless nightmare of the blitz. How great this sacrifice was seemed all the more impressive to me, both as an American and as a Jew. In the middlewest, isolationism was still strong in the early 1940s, and its chief organ was the *Chicago Tribune*, the paper owned by the greatly anti-British Colonel Robert McCormick. All the American isolationists of the day—including, alas, H. L. Mencken—were anti-British, all full of suspicions about the craftiness of the English, who they believed would somehow trap us in a war that was, strictly speaking, none of our damn business.

The plight of the Jews was never lost on Winston Churchill. Far from it. As Martin Gilbert has recently pointed out, the inexorability of the Nazi death machine was always on Churchill's mind, and much of his strategy during the war was devoted to rescuing as many Jews as possible. Churchill, not Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was, and has remained

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for me, the premier hero of World War II.

The next great English influence in my life came from the best of all colonizers, English literature. In the public schools of Chicago, such literature as was studied, apart from the thin gruel of a bit of Longfellow and Washington Irving, was English literature. Christmas, as I understood it, was practically invented by Charles Dickens. Dickens, too, in *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*, described the poignant conditions of poverty and of being orphaned. He also taught one to have great expectations. And, once again, heroism: "For it is a far, far better thing I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known." Sydney Carton's words, written by Charles Dickens, music by Ronald Colman, spoke to a longing in every boy's heart to perform acts of unknown heroism to the great benefit of a beloved. We first learned Roman history from a fellow named Shakespeare. From him, too, we learned adolescent passion through *Romeo and Juliet*. In America, our conceptions of honor, courage, romance, and decency were all imported from England.

English culture seemed to advance in perfect synchronization with my own development. I came into my adolescence in time for the wonderful Alec Guinness movies. As my own youthful anarchic humor began to take root, there was Terry-Thomas, with that malevolent gap in his front teeth. The next stop on my personal Anglophiliac express was "Beyond the Fringe." As an American, it was natural for me to compare these performers with our own marvelously funny comedy team of Mike Nichols and Elaine May, and it seemed to me that "Beyond the Fringe" won the day. Nichols and May were more intimate, more psychoanalytic, and thus more neurotic. "Beyond the Fringe" was more freewheeling and more anarchic, operating from a larger, wider, and more social base.

I was, I see now, most fortunate not to have been born into a wealthier, more social-minded family, else I might have been sent to an American prep school and thence on to an Ivy League university. The American prep schools Groton, Choate, St. Paul's, Exeter, and Andover, showing the long educational influence of Anglophilia in America, were directly modeled on Eton, Winchester, and Harrow and instilled in their charges a strong tinge of snobbery. Much of what is called WASP culture, now dying out in America, had its basis in Anglophilia.

In much the same way, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were meant to be mini-, if not imitation, Oxbridges. Yale University is said to have no fewer than seven replicas of the chapel at King's College. During their by-now fairly long histories, these schools have been staffed by many a stuffed-shirt English impersonator. One thinks of Barrett Wendell in the English Department at Harvard who, with his insistence that English literature was best studied only by students of English descent, gave Anglophilia a very poor name.

A friend has recently recounted his memory of himself, in his second year at Harvard, walking the Harvard Yard, saying to himself: "Well, O'Brien, it's time to make a choice. Are you going to become another of these Ivy League false Englishmen or remain your good old Irish, lower-middle-class self?" He, my friend, chose the latter, which, despite rising high in the world, he remains, immutably, immitigably, admirably, today. I'm not so sure that, at the same age, my own answer would not have been "an Ivy League false Englishman."

Fortunately, I wasn't put to the test. I went to the University of Chicago, where I studied English literature. English literature and Englishness generally weren't highly valued at the University of Chicago. Science and social science and classical and Continental philosophy were the subjects that rang the gong of high seriousness there. Only two of my teachers, both in English history, neither particularly distinguished, were Englishmen. The tone at Chicago was clearly European, if not worldwide international. The social note was not hit at all. Snobbery, which has so often accompanied American Anglophilia, was confined at Chicago to pure intellectual snobbery.

Yet this didn't stop me—and not me alone—from feeling culturally inferior. American inferiority to Europe had, of course, been going on for a long time. "It is a complex fate, being an American," Henry James famously wrote, "and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe." James, as is well known, felt American society insufficiently dense, American culture altogether too thin, to support his own vastly complex artistic ambitions. Yet by mid-twentieth century, most Americans felt, more simply and directly, that Europeans had wider

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and deeper experience than they and that the ground between us would probably never be made up.

Under Nazism and then under Communism, Europeans had looked the devil in the eye. Orwell, Koestler, Silone, Malraux, Pasternak—America produced no names (none that even came close) to match these. Existentialism might have made sense in France, but in America it seemed pure pretension. Being a thoughtful American in the 1950s—a serious and productive time—was the intellectual equivalent of being a yokel, a rube, a bumpkin.

Of course, the English had felt the effects of Nazism and Communism less directly than Continental Europeans, and for good reason. Something in the English character was too stolid—too sensible is the more charitable word—to be swept away by the mad ravages of ideology. England was too fair-minded a country for organized, really vicious hatred. A Dreyfus Affair was inconceivable in England; a Benjamin Disraeli was not. England might have had Philby, Maclean, Blunt, & Co.; but Communism was never really a gravely serious issue. "The country," wrote E. M. Cioran, the Romanian cynic, whether with regret or admiration is unclear, "has not produced, to my knowledge, a single anarchist."

What England had traditionally produced instead was a home, a safe harbor, for anarchists, Communists, and other international troublemakers and losers, along with such occasionally valuable men as Alexander Herzen. The rightness, the spiritual generosity and handsomeness of it, was not lost on one of the world's most impressive Anglophiles, Joseph Conrad, as he made plain in *The Secret Agent.* The genius of England, as Conrad knew, had much to do with its parochialism, a parochialism that refused to go flying off in pursuit of millennialist dreams at the expense of its integrity. This integrity derived from centuries of good humor, courage, and common sense and prepared the ground for Anglophilia.

Some Americans came to their Anglophilia by descent. Others, who could not claim England as an ancestral home, found in England what they felt was a spiritual home. As a burgeoning intellectual, I know I felt this myself. The fact is, even though I was otherwise perfectly at home in the United States, I never quite felt intellectually at home here. I did not, for one thing, feel that my country's literature spoke to me. I recognized the raw genius of its very greatest books—the best stories of Hawthorne, *Moby Dick*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Great Gatsby*, Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, Willa Cather's *The Professor's House*, the stories of Ernest Hemingway, the novels of William Faulkner—but they didn't, in some fundamental way, touch me. The reason they didn't, I have come to believe, is that they all take the individual to be always and forever at odds with his society. I have never felt that; nor do I wish to feel it.

Only recently did I find my inchoate thoughts on this subject nicely formulated for me in one of Lionel Trilling's lesser-known essays, "An American View of English Literature." Early in this essay Trilling makes a striking distinction that ought to have been obvious to me long ago. He wrote:

> The difference [between English and American literature], lies in the way the two literatures regard society and the ordinary life of daily routine. As compared to American literature, British literature is defined by its tendency to take society for granted and then to go on to demonstrate its burdensome but interesting and valuable complexity. And American literature, in comparison with British, is defined by its tendency to transcend or circumvent the social fact and to concentrate upon the individual in relation to himself, to God, or to the cosmos, and, even when the individual stands in an inescapable relation to the social fact, to represent society and the ordinary life of daily routine not as things assumed and taken for granted but as problems posed, as alien and hostile to the true spiritual and moral life.

W. H. Auden puts the matter much more starkly: "American literature is one extraordinary literature of lonely people."

It is to the point, I think, that Lionel Trilling, one of the subtlest of American minds to turn to literary criticism in the current century, himself felt less than at home in American literature. Would Trilling have functioned better in England? Difficult to say. When Americans become Englishmen, of course, they tend to overdo it. When the young Henry James was admitted to the Reform Club in London, he wrote home, "J'y suis, j'y suis—for ever and a day." And England, as James's biographer Leon Edel writes, "speedily opened its

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arms to him, as it does to anyone who is at home with the world." T. S. Eliot, perhaps the American who most thoroughly reinvented himself as an Englishman, used to wear a white rose on the anniversary of the Battle of Bosworth, in memory of Richard III, whom he apparently considered the last true English king. It was, I think, the idea—let us call it the ideal—of a coherent society that drew both James and Eliot to England and that may have driven many lesser men and women to more or less intense cases of Anglophilia.

In the 1950s, along with the notion of England as a coherent society, an additional notion was abroad that everything in English life—food and central heating excepted—was superior. English schooling, English tailoring, English shoemaking, English manners—all were thought the best the world had to offer. Some of the most impressive Americans, in fact, came awfully close to being Englishmen themselves. Justice Holmes was, according to his first biographer, Mark De Wolfe Howe, "in many respects an Englishman"; his "commitment to the English tradition . . . set him out of the central stream of American life."

The notion of English superiority extended to English speech and the use of language generally. Not a few Americans have attempted English accents, usually with comical result. In my own Anglophilia, I have never gone quite that far. I did, though, envy the use of certain English locutions and pronunciations, all the more because I knew they were not really available to me. I avoided writing the phrases "put paid to," "in the event," and "spot on." I would not allow myself to utter the English pronunciations of *tirade* (tearod) and *controversy* (contravarsee), which seem to me so much more mellifluous and amusing than the American ones. I have got over all this, but shall go to my grave regretting not being able either to say or write the word *whilst*, though I see I have now at least written it, and, poof! the regret is nearly gone.

Of course, much could—and has—been said against England. Begin with its class system, which, I note, Stein Ringen, Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at Oxford, claims is long gone, but it has left in its wake what he calls "a class psychology: the preoccupation with class, the belief in class, and the symbols of class in manners and dress." My friend the late Edward Shils, for many years a teacher at the London School of Economics and then at Cambridge and himself a strong Anglophile, in 1955 lectured English intellectuals on being too insular and self-satisfied, too concerned with wine and gardening, too anti-American, too much taken with cultivating eccentricity. And yet, even when one has said the worst about the English, they remain a talented and endlessly interesting people, whose "greatest asset," as G. M. Trevelyan wrote in 1940, is their national character.

My own immersion in Anglophilia, I see now, came at the height of what Noel Annan has called Our Age. If it was an age, in Annan's view, that presided over the decline of England in many ways, to an American it still seemed very grand. An emblem of it, one of the earliest to fall into my hands, was the magazine *Encounter*. My memory of that magazine, whose first issues I read in the middle 1950s, is chiefly of its general elegance: of design, of typeface, of content. Issues might contain poems by W. H. Auden, an essay on Russian intellectuals by Isaiah Berlin, a story by V. S. Pritchett, H. R. Trevor-Roper on Arnold Toynbee, Kenneth Tynan on Brecht, Nigel Dennis on Pirandello, Anthony Crosland on the future of the Labour Party, Evelyn Waugh on Aristocracy, N. C. Chaudhuri on England and India, Cyril Connolly on who cared what. In its pages everything seemed lucid, witty, and blithely learned. The American Central Intelligence Agency, it was later revealed, had secretly helped finance this extraordinary magazine. One only wishes they could arrange to do it again.

A few years later I began reading the *New Statesman* and the *Spectator*, and, less regularly, the BBC's *Listener*. The *New Statesman* was closer to my leftish views of those days and seemed to me, under the editorship of a journalist of great suavity named John Freeman, the liveliest of these journals. I read it in an "air" edition, in thin, almost tissuey paper. I gobbled it up—all of it: the leader, reports from the Labour Party conferences in Blackpool, the "London Diary," the zany letters, the bits on English nuttiness called "This England," the book reviews, all the arts criticism, the parody competition in the back. People spoke about a tension between the front half (political) and the back half (arts and culture) of the *New Statesman*, but I found it made things all the more piquant.

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In the late 1950s and early 1960s, such figures as Evelyn Waugh, Kingsley Amis, and F. R. Leavis appeared side by side in the *Spectator*, though there was much disagreement among them. The *New Statesman* could run Malcolm Muggeridge, in his pre-Christian phase, mocking everything for which its earnest political editors seemed to stand. To mark its fiftieth anniversary in 1963, the *New Statesman* commissioned a history of itself, and then the editors assigned it for review, in its anniversary issue, to Conor Cruise O'Brien, who promptly attacked the book and the *New Statesman* itself. That spoke to a wondrous kind of intellectual confidence simply unavailable in America.

The English weeklies seemed to me easily superior to the American ones, the *Nation* and the *New Republic*. (I had myself by this time begun to write for the latter.) The American weeklies seemed half the time to be preaching, the other half to be teaching—not at all my notion of a journalistic good time. The English weeklies, on the other hand, were written for equals: it was assumed that the readers were quite as sophisticated, intelligent, and cultivated as the editors. Even if—as in my case in my twenties—it wasn't quite true, it was pleasing to be covered by the generous umbrella of such assumptions.

Not only did the English weeklies provide first-class journalism and criticism, but their editors and contributors, unlike the people who wrote for intellectual magazines in the United States, seemed to go in and out of government: Ian Gilmour, the editor of the *Spectator*, and John Freeman served in Conservative and Labour governments respectively; later R. H. S. Crossman, a brilliant journalist, after serving as a minister in the Harold Wilson cabinet, returned to edit (and damn near ruin) the *New Statesman*.

Karl Miller, who served as literary editor of both the *Spectator* and the *New Statesman*, has recently described the former—and I suspect he could as easily have included the latter—as a paper "in which Establishment and Enlightenment were conjoined." The idea that an intellectual could serve in government without being thought a sellout—well, nothing of the kind was remotely possible in the United States. Chalk up another good reason for Anglophilia.

Much of this grew out of the English tradition of the amateur, which itself derived from that of the English gentleman, who could do many things well and all with the appearance of effortlessness, easy elegance, and sangfroid. Elegance and sangfroid are at the heart of the modern concept of the cool, an English invention, I think. Nor did one have to be born a gentleman to share in it. Kenneth Tynan claimed that Noël Coward was, for the modern era, the inventor of the cool. It was Noël Coward who, at being greatly feted upon his seventieth birthday, after receiving handsome toasts from Sir Laurence Olivier and the Earl of Mountbatten, remarked: "I am awfully overcome at this moment, and as you can see, restraining it with splendid fortitude."

English cool has always seemed impressive to Americans, certainly to the Anglophiles among us. It is represented by Evelyn Waugh, stepping out of a bunker during a Nazi bombing raid in Yugoslavia, looking up at a sky raining down bombs and announcing, "Like all things German, this is vastly overdone." It is Thomas Beecham on English philistinism toward serious music: "They don't much like music, but they rather like the sound it makes." It is Maurice Richardson, agreeing to review a book on ants for the *TLS* and then, in the first paragraph of his review, stating that his sole qualification for writing this review is that, as a boy, he ate ants, which he and his friends called "tramp's caviar."

English insouciance seems to me also partly based on the English distrust of the theoretical and concomitant respect for the factual. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in *English Traits*, remarks that "the English shrink from a generalization." Paul Valéry, recounting a visit to London in 1896, recalls receiving an article providing an account of German commercial competition by a Mr. Williams, "presented [Valéry notes] in the English manner: with the fewest ideas possible and the most facts."

This willingness to delimit oneself to the ground of fact, to the palpable and the knowable, is at the heart of English common sense, which is another English quality greatly attractive to Anglophiles. Owing to this strong strain of common sense, English culture was never permeated—as American culture still is—by fashionable "isms." When asked what he thought about Freudianism, Max Beerbohm replied: "A tense and peculiar family, the Oedipuses." Only an Englishman would have

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chosen that lovely, comic, absolutely on-target sentence. When asked if he still read novels, Gilbert Ryle is supposed to have replied, "Yes, all six of them—every year," referring of course to Jane Austen's works but also speaking to the confident self-sufficiency of English culture.

The allegiance to common sense implies an automatic diminution of zeal. English humor features, in a way American humor does not, the outrageously sensible. Consider the joke about the English boy whose immigrant Jewish father, a shoemaker, puts him through Oxford and then through medical school. He soon becomes a successful Harley Street physician. Wishing to do something for his father, the young doctor sends him to his own Savile Row tailor. After five fittings, the father emerges resplendent in a most elegant, vested, pin-striped, dark grey suit. When the son compliments his father on the suit, the old man breaks down, tears flooding his face. "Papa," the son asks, "are you crying because you are so touched by my gift?" "No, you idiot," says the father, "I'm crying because, in this suit, I realize for the first time what it means for us to have lost India."

So deep runs my Anglophilia that I believe I understand what the old gentleman was crying about. Do many people, I wonder, feel nostalgia for something they have never really known? I have felt this for the British Empire. I wish I had known it; I sometimes—blasphemous thought—wish it were still intact. Despite all its injustices—see here Kipling, Conrad, Maugham, Orwell, Graham Greene, and others—the British Empire remains one of history's grandest adventures. "You belong to a race that's been bossy for years," announces a character in Noël Coward's play *This Happy Breed*, "and the reason it's held on as long as it has is that nine times out of ten it's behaved decently and treated people right."

Whatever one can say against the British Empire, it was a fine forcing house for developing men of strong character, and doing so at a very early age. George Orwell was perhaps as vehement a critic as the Empire had, yet there he was, at the age of nineteen, still Eric Blair, a member of the Burmese Imperial Police, with administrative responsibility for more than a quarter of a million people. Despite his powerful criticism of all that was corrupt in colonial relations, Orwell seems to have had the character required for the task, and it made a better man of him.

But, then, Orwell was among the last of a strong generation of Englishmen. It may have been the generation that saw in the age of the common man, but it was itself made up of the most uncommon men. Considering the intellectual realm alone, think of the extraordinary historians—Hugh Trevor-Roper, A. J. P. Taylor, Herbert Butterfield, Lewis Namier; the philosophers—A. J. Ayer, Isaiah Berlin, Gilbert Ryle, and J. L. Austin; the novelists—Evelyn Waugh, Anthony Powell, Barbara Pym, and Graham Greene; the critics—F. R. Leavis, William Empson, and V. S. Pritchett. Each seems quintessentially English, even those not born in England (Berlin and Namier); none seems replaceable or likely ever to be replaced.

As a good Anglophile, I feel a nostalgia, similar to that I feel for the British Empire, for Oxford and Cambridge. When I first saw both universities, I felt a hopeless yearning, a sadness at not having gone to one of them. I have read a vast amount about them in various English novels and memoirs. I feel I have been tutored by Maurice Bowra at Wadham, occupied Max Beerbohm's rooms at Merton, thought I saw Wittgenstein depart Bertrand Russell's rooms at Trinity, and, at the age of sixty, am still hopeful about being made an Apostle. I have acquired so much information about Oxford and Cambridge that I feel entitled to a degree from one or the other—a disappointing second, perhaps.

I have myself had only the most glancing contact with some of the figures of the strong generation of English intellectuals. I met, rather late in his life, John Sparrow, who was already doing what I assume were set pieces: "Mr. Aristides, I understand that Americans believe that it is self-evident that all men are created equal. It had better be self-evident. After all, you realize, there is no other evidence for it."

I did, in the United States, work for Sir William Haley, a man of the same generation, whose kindness and strength of character only increased my own Anglophilia. Sir William had been editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, editor of the *London Times*, director-general of the BBC, and editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, where I encountered him. (I secretly thought he was attempting to compile

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the world's perfect editorial resumé.) I later learned that he had achieved all he had without ever going to university; his was a career that seemed to prove Emerson's notion of England as "aristocracy with the doors open."

Sir William came to *Britannica* with the reputation of a cold man who didn't mind firing lots of people; a "Robespierre with two glass eyes" was the journalistic epithet assigned him. He turned out to be a shy and very courteous man. He seemed to have read everything. When I somewhat trepidaciously gave him something I had written, he generally returned it with a laconic but perfect capping comment. I recall sending him a copy of a review I had written of a reissue of Alexander Herzen's *My Past and Thoughts*, to which he appended the single-sentence note: "You have nicely caught his jumble." He wore heavy tweed suits through steamy Chicago summers, walked extraordinary distances in grim Chicago winters. A powerful trencherman, his language was filled with food metaphors about people "dropping their plates" and "over-egging their puddings."

Sir William hadn't known it, but, in taking on his assignment at *Britannica*, he had walked into a situation where traps were everywhere laid for him by people who wanted a different, less literary, less elegant *Encyclopaedia Britannica* than he. He soon knew about this yet refused to fight below the level of intellectual argument and high principle. He was defeated, as good sense so often is in the world, but he departed with his integrity entirely intact.

There were nearly fifty years' difference in our ages, and Sir William's being the kind of Englishman he was did not make for easy intimacy. In fact, we only became close later, after he left America, in our letters. His own letters were splendid: full of talk about his reading, reminiscences of such figures as Desmond MacCarthy, and a generous interest in my own writing. When I reported to him that I, too, had left *Britannica*, he wrote back: "I am glad you have left. They worship different gods than we." No one, I think, could indite such a sentence today and have it carry the same weight.

"They worship different gods than we." Difficult to imagine Kingsley Amis writing that. Impossible to imagine Martin Amis writing it. If one were to chart a date for the decisive change in England, perhaps it would be 1954, the publication date of *Lucky Jim*. In a way that doesn't quite apply even to the slashing comedy of Evelyn Waugh, *Lucky Jim* seemed to announce good-bye to all that more emphatically than any other single work. By "all that" I mean good-bye to Empire, good-bye to the idea of England's playing a role on the historical stage, good-bye to the ideal of the English gentleman, good-bye to any notions of English grandeur whatsoever. I don't for one moment blame all this on Kingsley Amis—to do so would be akin to blaming the fall of Paris on Proust—but only suggest that what his riotously funny novel adumbrated was that England could no longer take its own pretensions seriously. The clock had run out, the game was over.

Shortly before the publication of *Lucky Jim*, George Santayana, in a chapter of his *Dominations and Powers* titled "The Decline of the Great Powers," wrote:

> England . . . in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, acted the great power with conviction; she was independent, mistress of the sea, and sure of her right to dominion. Difficulties and even defeats, such as the loss of the American Colonies, did not in the least daunt her; her vitality at home and her liberty abroad remained untouched. But gradually, though she suffered no final military defeat, the heart seemed to fail her for so vast an enterprise. It was not the colonies she had lost that maimed her, but those she had retained or annexed. Ireland, South Africa, and India became thorns in her side. The bloated industries which helped her to dominate the world made her incapable of feeding herself; they committed her to forced expansion, in order to secure markets and to secure supplies. But she could no longer be war-like with a good conscience; the virtuous thing was to bow one's way out and say: My mistake. Her kings were half-ashamed to be kings, her liberals were half-ashamed to govern, her Church was half-ashamed to be Protestant. All became a medley of sweet reasonableness, stupidity, and confusion. Being a great power was now a great burden. It was urgent to reduce responsibility, to reduce armaments, to refer everything to conferences, to support the League of Nations, to let everyone have his own way abroad, and to let everyone have his own way at home. Had not England always been a champion of liberty? But wasn't it time now for the champion to retire? And wouldn't liberty be much freer without a champion?

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Others besides Santayana—Brooks Adams, brother of Henry, among them—predicted the decline of English power. It was not, after all, a difficult prediction to make. Nations, like persons, tire. England had had, after all, a long and magnificent roll of the dice. But when the fall came, it came pretty hard.

All that was left, it sometimes seemed, was a new, rather sad sense of limitation, along with what so often accompanies a sense of limitation among the highly intelligent—pervasive irony. The new English style was very heavy on irony. "Irony," Alan Bennett has written of himself and his countrymen, "is inescapable. We are conceived in irony. We float in it from the womb. It's the amniotic fluid. It's the silver sea. It's the waters at their priest-like task of washing away guilt and purpose and responsibility. Joking but not joking. Caring but not caring. Serious but not serious."

The ironic note, sometimes the plaintively ironic note, as in much of the verse of Philip Larkin, has for a long while now seemed the characteristic English note. It is not without its charms, to be sure, but it can come to seem a bit thin. Can it be that culture unaccompanied by power loses first its authority, then its assurance?

By the middle 1960s, as the historian John Lukacs has written, "Britain was . . . represented [to the world] by James Bond and the Beatles." In a recent issue of the *TLS*, a reviewer notes: "There is a growing controversy in Britain about a stratum of society that is experiencing very high rates of marital breakdown, that has no steady employment and depends largely on state handouts; many of its members regularly use firearms and encourage their children to do so. But it is not only the Royal Family that is causing concern." At the 1996 women's final at Wimbledon, the television camera was placed on the Archbishop of Canterbury—who, I noted, was chewing gum. A gum-chewing Archbishop of Canterbury—here, alas, may be the poignant symbol of England at the millennium.

Yet, for all this, Anglophilia remains, if not so firmly entrenched as in former days, yet still very much alive. The last monument to American intellectual Anglophilia survives in the *New York Review of Books*. Anglophilia remains fairly strong in American universities, especially in English and philosophy departments. The most suitable Englishmen here are generally left-wing and at least mildly contemptuous of Americans; and a good English accent can still be worth an additional ten to thirty thousand dollars in annual academic salary.

What might be called *Masterpiece Theater* culture is still very large in America—I am myself an habitué of it—at least among those who think themselves the educated classes. Anglophilia lingers in American real estate, where suburbs, developments, apartment buildings, and hotels continue to be given such names as the Buckingham, the Dorset, the Essex House, and the rest.

Yet that greatest of British ambassadors, English literature, shows signs of beginning to fade. "Georgetown University's abandoning of the requirement that English majors study at least two authors among Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton . . . ," the *New York Times* recently reported, "is now the norm, a new study by the National Alumni Forum finds." In the assault of multiculturalism, all of English culture can easily be portrayed as one large dead white European male.

Where does this leave your stalwart Anglophile? Rather less Anglophiliac, I suppose, than he was thirty years ago. And yet, as the Anglophile in question, I am not in the least sorry for my admiring immersion, however distant, in English culture. English culture, with its great writers, its remarkable statesmen, its heroic traditions, allowed me to discover a wider, and in many ways more heroic, world. As nineteenth-century Englishmen and Europeans studied the Greeks in search of an older and deeper culture, so it was to England that twentieth-century Americans, in search of the same treasure, hopefully turned. And, by and large, they were not disappointed.

In England they discovered a country that would not brook tyranny, that never for long departed common sense, that rang with laughter, that made life's possibilities seem both finer and grander. Whether there will always be an England, I do not know, but the contemplation of the greatness of English history, the firmness of the impress of English character, and the richness of English talent ensures that, come what may, there will always be an Anglophilia.

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There's Rosemary for Remembrance

JOHN KEEGAN

"I WOULDN'T MIND," I heard a woman's voice sobbing at my elbow "I wouldn't mind if my son had been killed. I wouldn't mind—if he could be here." Tears streamed down her kindly face. She clutched my elbow. "I wouldn't mind." There was a scent of roses and mown grass, the reflection of sunlight from white Portland stone, a cool and gentle Mediterranean breeze, the promise of heat to come. "I wouldn't mind."

Oh dear, I thought. *Oh dear. If only you knew.* We were two English people in a primal English setting: greensward, shrubs, flowering perennials, paved walks on which saxifrage rooted between the cracks, low walls, statuary and monolithic masonry—an English enclosure far from England. Mature trees shut out the vista to the landward side, but to the seaward there was a gap in the planting to show blue water lapping the foot of limestone crags. Thyme and laurel and olive ascended the hillsides, silver and gray and black to counterpoint the garden's lighter and darker greens. "Remember, green is a color," Gertrude Jekyll, the inventor of the modern English garden, advised her pupils; and here, below the hillsides, arid after summer drought, green was a brilliant, almost overpowering color. The grass beneath our feet was spongy with the morning's watering, and yesterday's and the days' before.

The landscape beyond the garden was ageless, with that Mediterranean agelessness which has captivated English travelers since they first began their journeys to rediscover, three hundred years ago, the classical world their ancestors had done so much to overthrow; but the garden was timeless, belonging neither to the present nor to the past but to an arrested moment that exists only in the English imagination.

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It is a moment suffused by classicism, inspired by the temperate wilderness, but transcending both, a moment when the work of man comes into equilibrium with the beauty of nature and an ideal landscape is brought to perfection.

Where are these landscapes? They surround the English. Some are accidental, tracts of the English countryside, a highly artificial creation four thousand years old in parts, where contour and woodland—woodland surviving from the primeval or planted in living memory—combine with plough and pasture, hedge and wall, to form a vision the English call England. The English vision is particularly present in the Cotswolds west of Oxford, in the South Hams of Devonshire, in Thomas Hardy's Dorset, along the Welsh marches of Herefordshire or Shropshire, in Beatrix Potter country above the Cumbrian lakes, in the Kipling territory of remoter Kent and Sussex. Yet that vision is also present wherever population is sparse, rainfall heavy, and agriculture intense but with tracts of ancient forest land making a patchwork of settlement and emptiness, the familiar and the mysterious.

Many are not accidental at all, but the handiwork of great landlords and the artists they employed to beautify what was already beautiful in a manner quite alien to the environment that soil and climate offered them. England is natural broadleaf forest land, with deep topsoil in which stone is hard to come by and the indigenous flowering plants are retiring and modest on color. Without relentless human effort, cleared land goes back to scrub in a few seasons and to forest in a century. Despite the power of these natural forces, English landowners decided in the seventeenth century to create private landscapes for themselves that defy north European ecology and to impose on their immediate surroundings those elements of classicism which they knew their Italian and many of their French equivalents enjoyed by inheritance. They began to build stone palaces in classical style, to lay out severely formal gardens on their doorsteps, and to reorder the more distant landscape versions into those idealized Italian landscapes painted by Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin with which they filled their picture galleries. There is, within a mile of my house in Wiltshire, one of the greatest of English ideal landscapes, the artificial lakeland garden of Stourhead. I often wonder whether the Hoare family, which created it, was not inspired to do so by the southerly vista into Dorset, which typifies that vision of an accidentally perfect England to which I have referred already. There are other such artificial and ideal landscapes at Blenheim and Ditchley north of Oxford, at Stowe in Buckinghamshire, at Castle Howard in Yorkshire, and at Chatsworth in Derbyshire, to name only some of the most famous. Every English county offers to visitors dozens of smaller, less spectacular versions of

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these models, and the English visit them in their millions, at the tourist season but also throughout the year, to commune with a central belief of their Englishness—that England is a garden, and that to be English is to be a gardener; that in life they are best at home in a garden; and that, in death, a garden is where they belong.

Few English people, of course, can hope to live at Stourhead or Stowe; and, perhaps, they really don't wish to inhabit such idealizations of nature. The English are homebodies, happy if in a fraction of an acre they can recreate some of the elements of that high style. They are greatly helped to do so by one of the longest running national radio programs, *Gardener's Question Time*, whose peripatetic panel of experts weekly instructs millions of listeners in the secrets of gardening practice by answering queries put by members of a local horticultural society that has succeeded in the competition to welcome the broadcast to their town or village. I often think that the enormous popularity of *Gardener's Question Time*, which has been on the air now for nearly forty years, is a touchstone of the difference between English and American culture. The extremes of climate in the United States, and its highs and lows of fertility and aridity, rule out the viability of a program based on the presumption of uniform temperature and cultivability. More than that, however, *Gardener's Question Time* presumes also that its listeners will have a lifetime to tend the same garden. It is a program for a people who do not move, or move at most a few miles down the road, and it would therefore be untransplantable into the restless mobility of the United States, whose people not only change states but coasts with a frequency that seems reckless, positively unnatural, to the BBC's cozy stay-at-homes.

I have been talking of the English worship of great gardens, the cathedral of their horticultural world. There is, quite as important, an alternative English gardening tradition, that of the cottage plot, the parish church of plantsmen and plantswomen. The great garden is formal and contrived, however artfully integrated into its normal surroundings, and its color tones are modulated and subdued. The cottage garden, by contrast, is spontaneous and informal, full of color and of plants allowed to have their head. The center point of the great garden is the paved or graveled walk running between trimmed topiary. That of the cottage garden is the herbaceous border and rambling rose. Both are equally English, though they have different origins. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, a new generation of English garden designers succeeded in combining these traditions into what is now accepted to be the classic English garden. Its layout draws on the seventeenth-century fashion for formality, on the eighteenth-century idealization of nature and classical civilization, and on

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a more recent enthusiasm for the vernacular. Some great gardens were adapted to accommodate the herbaceousness previously excluded as vulgar and unaristocratic, as at Arley Hall in Cheshire, where the beds date to 1846. Many more, the work of the newly rich, were radical reorganizations at old houses that had either fallen into decay or were designed in the new fashion from the start. Such houses were not necessarily large, but were built to the highest standards and given spaciousness by a deliberate policy of extending the architecture of the house out into the surrounding walls, terraces, summerhouses, and topiary hedges. The most sought after designer of these new houses was the young architect Edwin Lutyens, and the most inventive designer of the gardens associated with them, the self-taught horticulturist Gertrude Jekyll. They were often to cooperate. Lutyens helped Jekyll with what remains one of the most influential of all English gardening books, *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, and the results of their collaboration can be seen at such places as Orchards, Surrey; Marsh Court, Hampshire; Amport House in the same county; and Folly Farm, Berkshire.

Lutyens particularly favored low stone walls, paved walks, pergolàs, and pavilions in stripped-down classical style. Jekyll encouraged the planting of dwarf roses, creeping ground cover, gray and silver border plants, azaleas, and climbers such as hydrangea and wisteria. Their joint purpose was to soften masonry with vegetation that liked support, to sharpen natural forms with architectural straight lines, and to relieve the grays and browns of stone and brick with blues, yellows, and purples.

It was in exactly such surroundings that the tear-stained woman and I found each other, when she clutched my arm and burst into her outpourings about not minding if her son were killed. I was not the least surprised by her reaction. I had heard it, in different versions, many times before in many parts of the world. We were, as it happened, on Crete, in the Suda Bay British War Cemetery, where 1,571 servicemen are buried, mainly British but including large numbers of New Zealanders and Australians. Most were killed resisting the German airborne invasions of May 20, 1941, a disaster for the German parachutists involved, of whom 2,000 died on the first day, but a strategic victory for Hitler, who secured the island despite those catastrophic losses.

We might, however, have been in any one of the larger Commonwealth War Graves Commission's cemeteries anywhere in the world. The dead of the British Empire and Commonwealth of the two world wars are buried in 134 countries, from Algeria to Zimbabwe, including the former Soviet Union. In the list are the two tiny states of San

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Marino and Monaco, each containing two graves. The smallest cemetery is on Ocracoke Island, off North Carolina, with four graves; the largest is the Thiepval cemetery in the department of the Somme, France, where the bodies of 70,000 soldiers are buried, and the names of those missing in the great Somme battle of the First World War are commemorated. These are cemeteries proper, of which the Commission maintains about 2,000 throughout the world. Besides these are 23,000 individual graves or plots in nonmilitary cemeteries, for which the Commission also cares. One such grave is in Kilmington churchyard, under my bedroom window, and I see it every morning when I draw the curtains. It is that of Private S. Prince, Somerset Light Infantry, who died at age twenty-two on May 5, 1916—home, I presume, on leave from France just before the opening of the Battle of the Somme. Every two years an official of the Commission comes to scrub the headstone—one of over a million identical headstones in the world—and to cut the grass, tidy the surroundings, and ensure that Private Prince continues to repose in dignity.

There are, of course, many more dead than headstones. In every French cathedral a plaque, inscribed in French and English, displays the text *To the Glory of God and in Memory of One Million Men of the British Empire Who Died in the Great War and of Whom the Greater Number Rest in France.* Of those killed in France, the bodies of nearly half could not be found or were unidentifiable, while most of the naval dead were lost at sea. There is a similar proportion of missing among the dead of the Second World War. In some way the Commission commemorates the names of all of them. The numbers are staggering. Nearly 1.7 million names are commemorated, of which 900,000 are those of identified servicemen and women lying in marked graves. There are over 700,000 monumental inscriptions to the missing, but 200,000 of those are on graves reading *Known Unto God,* because the remains recovered by the Commission were unrecognizable. There are other variations. Some headstones record a casualty "known to be buried near this spot"; others, two or more names of bodies too intermingled to be buried separately.

An attempt was made in the immediate aftermath of the First World War to represent in visual terms what the Empire's loss meant (*Courage Remembered* by Edwin Gibson and G. Kingsley Ward, 1989):

> Imagine [the dead] moving in one continuous column, four abreast. As the head of that column reaches the Cenotaph in London, the last four men would be in Durham [240 miles away, in the north of England]. In Canada that column would stretch across the land from Quebec to Ottawa; in Australia, from Melbourne to Canberra; in South Africa, from Bloemfontein to Pretoria; in New Zealand, from Christchurch to Wellington; in New-

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foundland, from coast to coast; and in India, from Lahore to Delhi. [I might interpolate for an American audience: in the United States, from Boston to Philadelphia.] It would take those million men eighty-four hours, or three-and-a-half days, to march past the Cenotaph in London.

These distances may be nearly doubled since the Second World War, in which another 700,000—as opposed to 400,000 United States—servicemen died.

How was this vast army of the dead to be decently interred? That was the question that confronted the British government very soon after the first mass casualty lists began to be published in the national newspapers in 1915. The dead of Britain's earlier wars, frequent though those had been, were comparatively few in number. They had been buried near where they fell, commemorated by stones raised by their friends or their regiments, if commemorated at all. It was a disposal accepted by the poor from which the bulk of the army's soldiers came. In civil life the parents of many of them would have gone to an unmarked pauper's grave in town or city. In the countryside a wooden cross, soon to decay, would have indicated their plot in the churchyard. In my village, a resident has calculated, 25,000 bodies have been buried in the churchyard since the Norman Conquest, yet it contains only a few dozen stones, those of the better-off and none older than the eighteenth century.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the British were as a people better off. The funeral had become a major working-class ritual, perhaps the only public event in an individual's passage through life, and a marked headstone had become a symbol of respectability, that respectability which Victorian Britain had made its chief outward value. For that reason, though for many others, it was unthinkable that the dead of a national army, dying in their tens of thousands for King, Country, and Empire, should be left in hurried, unmarked graves, marked if at all by some makeshift cross nailed together by the deceased's comrades. In practice, things were worse than that. Bodies were being thrown together into abandoned trenches, sometimes in dozens; individual burials might be marked by a stake, dozens of which were kept ready by a graves registration officer, on which was affixed a metal plate stamped from a "penny in the slot" machine of a type common in railway stations. At best, given time and a spell out of the trenches, the soldiers might dig graves in French or Belgian churchyards; those began rapidly to fill up. Moreover, the better-off among the bereaved were erecting private memorials of a type the majority could not afford, and some were repatriating the bodies. Both practices struck the wrong note in what the govern-

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ment represented, and the population endorsed, as a national war.

Very early on, therefore, Britain established what, in retrospect, may be seen as several remarkable and nationally distinctive principles for the burial and commemoration of its war dead. One was that there should be no private memorials, "on account of the difficulties of treating impartially the claims advanced by persons of different social standing." Another was that there should be no repatriation of bodies, because of the commonly held feeling that, as one officer put it, "in spite of all differences of rank, we were comrades, brothers dwelling together in unity." A third was that officers and soldiers should be buried identically and together because, as Fabian Ware, the first War Graves Commission director, wrote, "In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred [officers] will tell you that if they are killed [they] would wish to be among their men." A fourth, the most important, was that each fallen soldier should be honored individually, so that, even in a war of mass slaughter, each should be represented as a hero in an epic of collective heroism.

These principles were to be greatly elaborated and their implementation standardized in the years to come. That was the achievement of Fabian Ware himself, a modest man who nevertheless deserves to be recognized as a major semiologist of British culture in the twentieth century. Semiology was not, of course, his purpose; semiologist was not a title he would have welcomed or even understood. That, nevertheless, is his title to fame, and it is richly deserved. Through him a peculiarly English—I say English in preference to British—language of symbols, some from nature, some from the mind or hand of man, has come to stand as a representation of how the nation wished to be seen by itself and by other nations at the end of its passage through an ordeal that tested the roots of its culture and identity to destruction. Some representation of this language of symbols can, as I have said, be found at sites in almost every country in the world, and I can testify to its continuing power to move the emotions of those who come upon them from personal experience. Wherever they are found—and I have found them in places as far apart as Alabama, Israel, Pakistan, and South Africa—the British are moved with pride and to tears, tears shed also by people who are not British at all. Fabian Ware, by instinct rather than artifice, succeeded in creating a great cultural artifact at which, I do not think I exaggerate in claiming, generations to come will wonder—as we do at the relics of the Roman legions—long after Britain's worldwide power is only a memory for historians.

Ware had much help. In 1915, soon after he was appointed, the French government wrote a law deeding land for the cemeteries of

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foreign soldiers as a *sépulture perpétuelle.* It passed, but not without opposition, for it was against the local traditions both of storing the bones of the dead in ossuaries, a cheap and compact way of burying remains en masse, and of reusing burial plots. As a result, however, British war graves were to be the resting places of individuals in legal perpetuity. He also had assistance from several foremost British architects, including Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker, who with Lutyens was a designer of the Empire's great public buildings. Rudyard Kipling's role in the design of the Imperial War Graves was a poignant one. His only son, John, was too myopic to meet the army's medical standards, and he used his influence to secure John a commission in the Irish Guards. John was among the regiment's missing after the Second Battle of Loos in 1915. For several years Rudyard and his American wife, Carrie, toured the military hospitals in France seeking news of their lost one, without avail. At a moment of alleviation in his grief, he wrote a short poem always quoted among his selected works:

> My son was killed while laughing at some jest, I would I knew
> What it was, and it might serve me in a time when jests are few.

The truth, never communicated to the parents but discovered by a regimental comrade from survivors of John's company, was that he was last seen crying with pain from a wound in the mouth. His body, lost for decades, has only recently been identified by officials of the Commission, and his headstone is appropriately re-engraved.

It is acutely ironic, therefore, that Kipling was responsible for conceiving the inscriptions carved on the headstones and monumental sculpture of the Commission's cemeteries. These monuments take three forms. One is a high columnar cross, bearing a bronze sword, known as the Cross of Sacrifice. The second is a monolith, the Stone of Remembrance, on which are carved words from Ecclesiasticus, adapted by Kipling: *Their Name Liveth For Evermore.* The adaptation was made to avoid giving offense to Hindus, so many of whom died in the service of India's King-Emperor. The third is the universal and standard headstone, two feet eight inches high, one foot three inches broad. It is cut from white Portland stone, engraved with the deceased's regimental badge—Private Prince's, below my bedroom window, shows the mural crown, slung bugle, and battle honor "Jelalabad" of the Somerset Light Infantry—and also with an appropriate religious symbol. Today, 1.5 million bear the Christian cross; 65,000, the Muslim crescent; 100,000, the appropriate Sikh or Hindu symbol; 10,000, the Star of David; and 10,000, Buddhist or Confucian symbols. The

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stone is also inscribed with the dead serviceman or servicewoman's number, name, decorations, regimental title, age, and date and place of death; or as many details as could be ascertained when a body was disinterred for reburial—for example, *A Captain/Canadian Infantry.* At the bottom of the stone, relatives may place a personal inscription of up to sixty characters. These inscriptions are the exception rather than the rule, itself an indication of how heartfelt is popular acceptance of the guiding principle of uniformity of remembrance. They are often quite conventional—*Peace Perfect Peace,* for example, or *He Died That Others Might Live.* Eccentric or distasteful inscriptions are not allowed. Occasionally, however, an extra tug to the heartstrings is given by a particularly apt line of poetry or some quite artless phrase of lament, the labor of a young widow or of a family struggling together to express their love for a son and brother who will not return.

Kipling also struggled to find a form of words that would dignify without mawkishness the grave of a body that could not be identified. Eventually he hit upon the brief phrase *A Soldier of the Great War Known Unto God.* Unidentified burials of the Second World War are inscribed *A Soldier* [or *A Sailor* or *An Airman*] *of the 1939–45 War Known Unto God.* Altogether 204,145 graves in the Commission's care are now inscribed in one of these ways. The only other variations to the headstones are the use of the words *Served As* when a man enlisted under an alias, and the phrases *Buried In This Cemetery, Buried Near This Spot, Buried Elsewhere In This Cemetery,* and *Known To Be Buried In This Cemetery* when records allow such certainties but remains were not found. *Believed To Be Buried In This Cemetery* is sometimes seen, and, for wartime graves lost and defying rediscovery, Kipling chose the words *Their Glory Shall Not Be Blotted Out,* also from Ecclesiasticus. The rarest of all variations is the substitution for the religious symbol of a facsimile of the Victoria Cross or the George Cross, Britain's highest awards for bravery.

None of this symbolism could be imposed until the lost bodies of the dead were found and the makeshift cemeteries of the war reordered. Work began while the Great War was still in progress, but even at its end the condition of many burial places was deeply distressing to relatives who began to make their way to France and Belgium to find where lost ones lay. Too often the sites they discovered were patches of mud or torn earth, bereft of vegetation or covered by weed and rank grass. A scheme of order had to be devised. The task was given to Sir Frederic Kenyon, the director of the British Museum. Within the guiding principles of uniformity of commemoration and an individual grave for all recovered remains, he proposed that each cemetery should either "have the appearance of a small park or garden in no way recognizable as a cemetery," or that it "be marked by rows of

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headstones of a uniform height and width, the graves themselves being leveled to a flat surface and planted with turf and flowers." The rows of headstones would "carry on the military idea, giving the appearance as of a battalion on parade."

The second alternative was adopted; but, by some creative inspiration of those who undertook the work, the first alternative was integrated with it. The Commission cemeteries are unmistakably that; but they are also unmistakably parks or gardens in the classic English style. How did that come about? We can only guess that it was because the Commission, when it began to recruit maintenance staff, decided for administrative reasons not to enlist locals but to commission British firms that would send their own staff abroad. The practical work was therefore begun not by French or Belgian laborers but by British gardeners, already experienced as horticulturists or later trained at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. The style they brought with them was that which Lutyens and Jekyll—she actually drew up plans for several cemeteries—taught through their seminal gardening book. By March 1921, there were 1,362 gardeners employed; many were to settle in France or Belgium, marry local women, found little English communities, and put their sons into the Commission's employment. These communities still exist and now have equivalents in Africa, Southeast Asia, India, and Pakistan, all trained in and so carrying on the tradition of classic English country-house gardening in the desert and the tropics as well as in temperate northern Europe.

Other, deeper, literary influences were at work. The Great War provoked in Britain, uniquely among combatant nations, a poetic response. A very great deal of it was arcadian and pastoral. That, again, should not be surprising. As Paul Fussell has noted in his famous book, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, "Half the poems in *The Oxford Book of English Verse* are about flowers and a third seem to be about roses." He does not do a similar count for First World War poetry, but the result might be the same. Certainly some of the most famous are suffused with gardening themes. I would cite first Edward Shanks's "Drilling in Russell Square," from the earliest days of the war:

> The withered leaves that drift in Russell Square
> Will turn to mud and dust and moulder there
> And we shall moulder in the plains of France
> Before these leaves have ceased from their last dance.

Shanks was all too prophetic. Hundreds of thousands of the drilling men of 1914 and 1915 did moulder in the plains of France, becoming dust in the mud of the battlefields. The spectacle of their makeshift graves inspired one of the most famous of the war poems,

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by the Canadian John McCrae, himself to be one of the war dead. Its fame is a principal reason for the British custom of wearing a poppy on Remembrance Sunday:

> In Flanders fields the poppies blow
> Between the crosses, row on row,
> That mark our place; and in the sky
> The larks, still bravely singing, fly
> Scarce heard amid the guns below.
>
> We are the Dead. Short days ago
> We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow.
> Loved and were loved, and now we lie
> In Flanders fields.

Those themes were also used by Rupert Brooke in what remains the most famous of all English poems of the war, "The Soldier," which I can still repeat by heart from childhood memory:

> If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is forever England. There shall be
> In that rich earth a richer dust conceal'd;
> A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
> Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
> A body of England's, breathing English air,
> Wash'd by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

I cannot prove but I do feel—a poetic certainty—that the idea of making "some corner of a foreign field" a place that would be "forever England" was a principal motivation of the idea of the war cemetery as a pastoral, arcadian garden. It has, unconsciously or not, been the result.

What has been the effect of this partly intentional, partly accidental effort to honor the hundreds of thousands of British and Imperial war dead within the principles of individual yet uniform commemoration? It is different from that achieved by the French, who also buried their dead individually, but under a cross, which produces en masse a spiky and geometrical effect altogether lacking the mood of repose so immediately felt in all British war cemeteries. It is certainly different from that chosen by the Germans, whose dead lie in multiple or sometimes in mass graves—like that at Langemarck in Belgium, where 36,000 bodies of the students killed in the First Battle of Ypres are buried under a single giant slab—and whose cemeteries, heavy with evergreens and dark oaks, speak only of collective grief and national tragedy. It is also different from that which I associate with American

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cemeteries. There the small size of the headstones, a pattern chosen after the Civil War, the paucity of inscribed personal detail, and, as at Arlington, the intermixture of large, private memorials, often to generals or distinguished civilians, diminishes the sense both of uniformity and of the importance of the individual; while the absence of flowering plants and horticultural design brings a harshness quite at variance with the gardened serenity of the British equivalent. It may be for such reasons that the United States began to permit during the First World War the repatriation of bodies by bereaved families, an understandable response to grief but one that undermines the principle that those who fought and died in comradeship should also be buried in comradeship.

Of the effect of the method of commemoration chosen by the British toward the end of their national tragedy of 1914–18 I have no doubt. It created a deep bond of unity between the bereaved, and within the nation as a whole, which reached out to comprehend the peoples of the Commonwealth and Empire as well. The emotional touch was so sure that it extinguished—after a brief intense controversy in 1919—all demand for repatriation whatsoever. The dead of the Second World War are buried in exactly the same manner as those of the First, and today the only demand met by the government regarding burial policy is that war widows should be assisted with travel costs in visiting their husbands' graves. This has been conceded, and elderly women are now traveling as far away as Burma and Malaysia on cemetery pilgrimages—without exception returning consoled, often positively inspired, by the beauty of the setting in which they find their husbands buried.

Often they find a husband's grave next to that of an Indian Muslim or a Burmese Buddhist, exactly similarly commemorated, and that too has had, if not a unifying, at least a palliative effect. If the British parted with their imperial subjects on the comparatively unacrimonious terms they did, that may be in part due to the fact that they chose to make no distinction in the way or in the place where they buried those who fought the Empire's wars. Certainly it is remarkable that the rarest of the War Graves Commission's tasks is the repair of desecration. Their cemeteries in former imperial or colonial territory are almost never desecrated, even at times of outburst of nationalist rancor against the old imperial master.

But then neither are they in countries that were never part of the Empire or Commonwealth—former enemy countries, like Germany, or those that have subsequently fallen into war with Britain, like Argentina or Iraq. Why should that be? To trample the graves of the enemy is an apparently universal if regrettable human instinct. One of

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the saddest places I have ever seen is the deliberately abandoned and untended German war cemetery at Piontek in Poland, immaculately maintained until January 1945, now a wilderness. The only explanation I can offer for the immunity of the British cemeteries is that Lutyens and Jekyll and Kipling and Ware and their army of anonymous gardeners succeeded in creating something symbolically more powerful than a site for ritual desecration, a site of universally venerable sanctuary. There is a holiness in those cemeteries both of nature and its beauties and of religion in all its forms that defies hatred and brutishness, speaks of the immortal, and touches eternity.

If foreigners are moved by those emanations, how much more the British themselves. When in 1920 they buried an unknown warrior in the national shrine of Westminster Abbey—the first of many unknown warriors later to be buried by other countries—they chose this inscription for his grave: *They Buried Him Among the Kings Because He Had Done Good Towards God and Towards His House.* In burying their million and more warriors, known and unknown, in cemeteries that resembled and evoked the country-house gardens of the rich and propertied, they in effect buried them, if not among kings, then among knights and lords. It was a decision that ensured the individual remembrance of the most humble, exactly as members of the more famous families are remembered in their ancestral plots, an evergreen and renewable remembrance, a celebration of pedigree and a testament of continual youth.

"I always feel young when I come here" are words I remember from a visitor to another British war cemetery, which holds the dead of the Battle of Normandy in William the Conqueror's city of Bayeux. The war widow who spoke was one of a party in which all had lost their husbands fifty years before. None had remarried; the years had taken their toll, but they returned each year to place flowers on the graves of men killed in their twenties in the fight to liberate Europe from Hitler in 1944. "I always feel young," she repeated, "just as if I was the same age as when I last saw him." She had grown very stout. It was difficult to picture the bride of the months before D-Day. "Do stop, Betty," one of her friends interrupted, "or you'll make us all cry." It was I who was overcome with tears. The row of headstones of young infantrymen of the East Yorkshire Regiment, the roses growing around the feet of their widows, the strange glow of happiness that suffused their faces, were altogether too much for me. I was unable to speak, fortunately not unable to repress my impulse to embrace each in turn; to do so would have been an affront to our Englishness, to the fundamental Englishness of the place and the moment.

It was that same Englishness that overwhelmed my weeping com-

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panion in the Suda Bay cemetery on Crete. The tears I had shed in Normandy helped me to understand hers. Of course she would not, in a certain sense, have minded if her son had been killed. For Britain's war cemeteries create an aesthetic which is actually strong enough to prevail over the agony of maternal or connubial grief. To see a child to the grave brings the harshest pain human sensibility can suffer. Yet to find a child—or a husband or a father—buried as a hero, among coevals and comrades all raised to heroic states by a symbolism central to one's own culture, is to experience the transcendence of pain through the keenest emotions of pride in family and nation. The garden is a metaphor for the idea of beauty, of renewal, and of immortality to many peoples and many creeds. If this is indeed an age without heroes, seeking monuments that might still touch every human heart, the ideal garden may be what is sought. Certainly it is some image of the two thousand English gardens we have created around the world that allows us to repeat each November on Remembrance Sunday, without any false sentiment, some of the most famous verses the Great War inspired—Laurence Binyon's "For the Fallen (September 1914)"—verses that are an epitaph for heroes of any time or place:

> They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old:
> Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
> At the going down of the sun and in the morning
> We will remember them.

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The Aging of Democracies

C. VANN WOODWARD

In exploring European views, criticisms, fantasies, and delusions about democracy in the United States during the last two centuries, I discover that, almost from the start, European spokesmen tended to adopt a somewhat parental tone in addressing the American nation. That was perhaps only natural since there was a generational gap between them. In the family of Western nations, those of Europe constituted the first generation, and the United States the beginning of the second generation—the First New Nation, it has been called. So it was that the deferential tone normally assumed between equals—especially at the national level—should have sharpened at times and taken on the tone assumed by age toward youth, parent to offspring, master to apprentice, teacher to pupil, not to say superior to subordinate.

From the very start the youth metaphor seems to have been built into European thinking about America, and there it has stuck for hundreds of years. To illustrate the remarkable persistence of the youth theme, take the nineteenth century as an example. In the 1820s an Austrian writer declared that America's "political infancy is over," but maturity seemed remote. In the 1850s a Swedish writer thought that American failings, faults, and foibles "may all be attributed to the youthful life of the people." In the 1880s a sour English critic scorned an alleged American attempt to "plead youth as an excuse for moral decrepitude. A vicious and depraved youth," he added, "does not promise a healthy or an honorable old age." And in the 1890s Oscar Wilde quipped that "the youth of America is their oldest tradition." Wilde erred only in attributing to Americans a tradition that was European in origin and had by then become a European idée fixe.

It persisted right on through the twentieth century of world wars, revolutions, superpowers, nuclear weapons, and cold wars. Before the First World War, Americans were said to be "still for all intents and

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purposes, but the children of the world." After that war America showed "the spirit of a spoilt and not very clever adolescent boy." Shortly before the Second World War, it was said to be "still in the schoolboy stage." And finally, on the eve of the American bicentennial celebration in 1976, a Greek well-wisher, Konstantinos Doxiadis by name, suggested in an avuncular tone that America should be more appropriately celebrating its twentieth rather than its two hundredth birthday, since it was still "a promising adolescent who is lost among many dreams and disappointments."

To quote a Greek on the aging of democracies is to be reminded of the great struggles of the Athenians in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., the first democracy in our history, to keep their democracy alive for two hundred years. We recall the terrible odds against which Pericles and Demosthenes battled, the thirty years of the Peloponnesian War, the heavy casualties, the plague, the crushing defeat, and the leveling of the long walls. Surely a Greek should bear in his bones to this day ancestral knowledge of what a vulnerable, not to say ephemeral, thing a democracy can be and, as the life span of democracies goes, what a venerable age a democracy that has survived two hundred years has attained. Was it ancestral voices prophesying war?

I think it was primarily because Americans knew that the Czechs were thoroughly aware of the price of democracy—having paid it twice and yet having lost their freedom twice to modern Caesars—that we watched their small nation's crisis of December 1989 with greater intensity and concern and admiration than we had felt toward any of the other revolutionary dreams of that year. Their courage and spirit and determined love of freedom touched our hearts and will long remain there.

Speaking in Czechoslovakia in 1990 about the fragility of democracies, I had in mind the national experience of the people I was addressing during their "velvet revolution." If any nation should have blood knowledge of the vulnerability and fragility of democratic governments, it was surely this one. Democracies in that tragic country came and went with appalling frequency and suddenness. One of its great statesmen, Edvard Benes, wrote a book with the English title *Democracy Today and Tomorrow.* It might well have been called *Democracy: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow.* He delivered its chapters as a series of lectures at the University of Chicago in the fateful year 1939. "In this tragic moment of European history," he said, "I am addressing this appeal to the American people" in the name of "that great humanist, Masaryk." And he graciously acknowledged "the unforgettable assistance of the United States" in the founding of the government and the inspiring of its spirit. I did not need to remind that audience in

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Prague how during the next half century one betrayal followed another, one invasion after another—invasion by totalitarians from the west followed by invasion by totalitarians from the east.

In the meantime, other short-lived democracies had come and gone among the older generation of nations in the west—Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Germany, Austria. But these democracies met their end not at the hands of invaders, but by their own hands, betrayal from within, *self*-destruction. They in turn became instruments for the destruction of other democracies, older ones in the west and newer ones in East Europe. And now, what with restoration and revolution, new generations of democracies in West and East Europe have appeared, with promise of more to come.

All of which returns me to the old European idée fixe about the perennial youth of America, whether they called it infancy, childhood, adolescence, or permanently arrested development. Of course, they had more American characteristics than equality and democracy in mind when they used these terms. But more often than not, especially among the more conservative and aristocratic critics, democracy and its alleged foibles, absurdities, delusions, stupidities, and blunders bore the brunt of the youth and immaturity stereotypes. It never appeared to be any impediment to the European use of the youth stereotype for America that they were speaking of the first and oldest democracy in the modern community of nations, one that dated back to the eighteenth century. And this while many of them had become democracies of one sort or another themselves, and the aging "youth" had been around for a couple of centuries.

Consider a few samples of the kind of advice American democracy had received from its European critics. Even the most ill disposed of them usually disavowed all prejudice and claimed nothing but the best of intentions. "Prejudiced I am not," declared Charles Dickens in the 1820s, "and never have been, otherwise than in favor of the United States." Yet he was writing at the same time to a friend back in England, "I would not condemn you to a year's residence on this side of the Atlantic for any money." Another English writer, Frederick Marryat, promised solemnly in the preface of his book on Americans to "do them justice, without praising them more than they deserve." But after publishing his book, he admitted: "My object was to do injury to [the cause of] democracy. . . . I wrote the book with this object, and wrote it accordingly." Very few critics of the Americans were as candid and forthright as Frances Trollope. Writing in 1832 of "the population generally," rich and poor, north and south, rural and urban, she said quite simply, "I do not like them. I do not like their principles, I do not like their manners, I do not like their opinions."

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By way of contrast, few if any Europeans came to America with the openness of mind, the seriousness of purpose, and the depth of perception that Alexis de Tocqueville brought with him. He sought to *learn* as well as to teach. He hoped, he said, "to find there instruction by which we [Europeans] may ourselves profit." He continued: "I confess that in America I saw more than America; I sought there the image of democracy itself, its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions, in order to learn what we have to fear or hope from its progress." He had come reluctantly to believe that the nations of Europe "will soon be left with no other alternative than democratic liberty or the tyranny of the Caesars." Granting that "the wishes of democracy are capricious, its instruments rude, its laws imperfect," granting as well an appalling list of shortcomings that he abhorred—minds "so petty, so insipid, so crowded with paltry interests"—Tocqueville still regarded democracy "not as the best, but as the only means of preserving freedom." It was not a preference but a necessity, a necessity faced by all who cherished freedom and abhorred tyranny. "The question here discussed," he concluded, "is interesting not only to the United States, but to the whole world; it concerns not a nation only, but all mankind."

Other European critics of America were far less generous, tolerant, or hopeful than Tocqueville, and they still believed that aristocracy rather than democracy was the viable alternative to tyranny. Democracy only substituted the tyranny of the majority for that of the Caesars. After the French experiment in democracy of 1789 collapsed in a bloodbath and a dictatorship, the Americans remained for a time the only people in the world who still practiced the discredited heresies of democracy and equality. Conservative European critics generally agreed that Americans must be exposed as the center of subversion and the outstanding challenge to the establishment. They must be read a lesson and their failures, pretenses, crudities, and horrors must be exposed to the world, lest radicals at home, despite the French failure, follow the American example.

The conservative indictment of American democracy was that what Americans called "freedom" was really the tyranny of majority opinion or the dictatorship of "the mob." Americans enjoyed less freedom of speech than the people of any European country, they declared, no matter what form of government it had. Before the absolute rule of public opinion, the press, pulpit, judges, and all institutions bowed in abject submission. No independence of mind, no departure from custom, no individuality of opinion was possible. They were governed by the incompetent, the weak, and the corrupt because people of ability, intelligence, and integrity were driven from politics or repelled by its

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low standards. Their government was a miserable failure and proof to the world that ordinary people were incapable of governing themselves. That should be done by their superiors.

Without established aristocracy, church, or military to set standards, provide models, and govern manners, American culture and quality of life were irreparable disasters. In the name of equality all were reduced to one dead level of mediocrity. All were equal and all exactly alike in dress, speech, and manners, with no tolerance for eccentricity or deference to superiors. Servants showed no respect for their masters, children for their parents, or inferiors for those of higher social position. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Sir Lepel Griffin summed up the conservative consensus: "America is the country of disillusion and disappointment, in politics, in literature, culture, and art, in its scenery, its cities, and its people." He could scarcely think of any country in which life would be "less sordid and mean and unlovely," with the possible exception of Russia.

Of course there were more charitable and favorable European views of America. In fact there were enthusiasts and champions of America in many countries. Like the conservatives, however, their opinions were strongly shaped by their politics. The pro-Americans were as likely to be democratic in their political alignments and aspirations as the anti-Americans were to be conservative and anti-democratic. These correlations continued through the twentieth century until Marxist radicals joined the anti-American cause and intellectuals of whatever class tended to become anti-American as soon as they became Marxist. Whether from right or left, however, the anti-Americans continued, like conservatives, to attribute in some measure whatever shortcomings and failures they saw in the Western democracy to immaturity, retarded development, or some less flattering attribute of America's eternal youthfulness.

The barrage of critical European opinion showed little signs of abating until quite recently, when the Marxist decline set in. But as late as 1976, the novelist Saul Bellow, in his Nobel Prize address, complained that "every year we see scores of books and articles that tell the Americans what a state they are in—that make intelligent or simpleminded or extravagant or lurid or demented statements."

All along it has been clear to Americans of intelligence, however, that their society stood in need of criticism. As a matter of fact, few Europeans could equal some native American critics in the harshness and severity with which they have written of the stupidities and crudities of their own civilization. There were some who realized that it was harder for the self-governed to criticize their governors than it was for those governed by rulers they had no voice in choosing. Some Ameri-

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can critics agreed with Tocqueville that the ruling majority "lives in the perpetual utterance of self-applause, and there are certain truths which Americans can learn only from strangers or from experience." Granting all that, it remains to be added that unfortunately Tocqueville had no equal among the many European conservative critics of American democracy for the fairness and justice of his criticism. Instead, the bulk of the conservative critique was burdened with the contempt and condescension characteristic of the examples I have quoted. And it came dressed in the cliché of age and experience advising youth and inexperience, and came often from critics whose country had never experienced democracy (or had abandoned it after a brief trial), and was addressed to the oldest democracy then in existence.

I stress these relationships to show why Americans, now that so many new democracies have recently appeared on the scene, may be tempted to turn the tables on the Old World and start lecturing its inexperienced youth from the vantage point of advanced age and long experience in the New World. If Americans should yield to this temptation, I hope they will give the new European democracies wiser advice and better criticism than they have been receiving so long from the nations of the Old World. I urge them to be cautious and skeptical in receiving and applying such counsel as the old democracy of the New World may choose to offer. They should not be surprised at outbursts of unsolicited advice and criticism from my fellow countrymen. There are so many newer and less-experienced, would-be democracies that have never tried it before, most of them all the more tempting as targets for a youthfulness approaching the infantile.

We were too prone to think of the newborn democracies as entirely European phenomena, when half-a-dozen mid-European countries broke free from Soviet totalitarian rule and the Soviet empire fell apart. I do not for a moment intend to minimize those revolutions. They were the historical thrill of a lifetime, and we sat spellbound before our television screens, filled daily with millions of faces in the ancient squares of Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Berlin, or Bucharest. They came so fast, one hesitated to turn off the TV for fear of missing a revolution.

Important as they were, however, they were only a few—in a decade that has witnessed scores of upheavals worldwide—that at least called themselves democratic and believed themselves to be so, however much they might differ from each other and from the Euro-American concept of democracy. As doubtful and fragile as some of these claims are, they, along with more firmly established new governments, represent quite substantial recent advances in freedom. The president of Freedom House, an American organization that keeps careful score of

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gains and losses in freedom around the world, reported recently that in 1995 he classified 76 of the existing 191 sovereign states and related territories as free democracies—this as compared with 53 of 167 in 1985. That gain of 23 democracies in ten years, however, must be weighed against a sharp decline in the percentage of the world's people included in the free states over the same decade—a decline of 15 percent from 35 percent in 1985 to only 20 percent in 1995. The remaining 80 percent were divided about equally between the partly free and the decidedly unfree states. The outcome of the Balkan tragedy promises to increase the latter category.

Losses often exceeded gains. Newly established free governments are often threatened by military domination of their own forces or by a takeover by old totalitarian parties that have only changed their names. The demand for democracy is frequently accompanied by waves of nationalism and irredentism, the release of old religious, racial, and ethnic hatreds, and the revitalization of outmoded, unjust, and flawed economies. In some cases it is difficult to say which of these combined impulses is uppermost. We must remember that when the partly free countries are added to those definitely not free, the two classes combined account for more than 80 percent of the world's population in 1995. When we recall that twenty-odd major conflicts, including civil wars, still rage unresolved in the world, the prospects of a democratic wave of the future grow even darker. I suppose the lesson of all this is that the euphoria of 1989, the *anno mirabilis*, was misleading and that democracies must be more cautious in counting their allies and reckoning their gains.

Having warned Europeans about the likelihood of receiving unsolicited advice and criticism from an old democracy in the New World to new democracies in the Old World, I find I am one of the first offenders myself—even if part of my advice to Europeans is to be skeptical of the wisdom of age and slow to accept its criticism. Some democracies, however young, are more fortunate than others in the circumstances of their origins. Those that begin, for example, with firing squads or heads on pikes or heads rolling from the guillotine have less fortunate prospects than those that start with bloodless or velvet revolutions, like the Czechs. (America's revolution, of course, was neither bloodless nor velvet, but not as bad as some.) On the whole it is better to have a Thomas Jefferson or a Tomas Masaryk as liberator and founding father than to have a Robespierre. Think, for example, of the plight of the new democracy of Mongolia, which was recently driven to the choice of Genghis Khan as its national hero.

As for my depressing reflections about the vulnerability, fragility, and brief life span of democracies, it may be some comfort to remem-

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ber that the durability of totalitarian regimes of recent years has not been all that impressive. Some seem to age faster than democracies. The biblical life span of three score and ten years attained by the Soviet experiment was not at all typical. The fascist dictatorships of Franco in Spain and Mussolini in Italy were not nearly so lengthy, and the German experiment ended with Hitler's suicide after a mere dozen years in power. As for the Chinese mysteries, it remains to be seen whether the poet Tennyson's adage proves applicable: "better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." Such statistics may help to give the Old World some tolerance, perhaps even a bit of sympathy, for the pride a New World democracy takes in lasting two hundred years. Whether age produces wisdom is another matter. The American experience at the hands of an aging Old World was not very reassuring in this respect. Nor, for that matter, is the recent triumph of reactionary and irrational politics in the United States of America.

There exists a relativity of age, even among the very young, that should prove of comfort to new or revived democracies of Europe. Take for example the infancy of democracy in Nicaragua or the democracy still struggling to be born in Kenya. South Africa still seems, for now, a striking exception of success. And when we read in the press of "an acceleration of the movement against one-party rule" in Algeria, Somalia, Ethiopia, Benin, Gabon, Zaire, Angola, and Tanzania, all of which at times are reported to have "accepted the principle of pluralism," we are tempted to substitute the term *fetal* for the term *infant* democracies.

Democracy is no guarantee of prosperity or even economic stability. After all, Europeans of all political persuasions experienced the Great Depression of the 1930s, whether under democracy or not. As Americans have good reason to know, the economy of a democracy is subject to panic, recession, and long spells of depression. I hope new democracies can escape some of those cyclical misfortunes, but if so it will not be because of democracy. Kicking out the dictators and commissars and converting to elected democracies are splendid and laudable, but economic conditions can apparently worsen for a time as a result. Think only of the recent experiences of the Russian empire and its dismembered parts and of Latin American countries. Fifteen years ago more than half the Latin American and Caribbean people were under military rule. We rejoice that today the majority of them live in some sort of democratic or partly democratic system. Yet they now despair to find their economic plight often worsened instead of improved. They are not the only newborn or aspiring democracies to discover that adopting the market economy does not automatically produce abundance.

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For all its long and continuous history as a democracy, the United States has an economy that can produce disgraceful amounts of unemployment, poverty, and homeless people at the very time the fortunes of the rich are increasing. If the arms race of the Cold War helped to wreck the Soviet economy and ruin its claim of salvation for the workers of the world, the Cold War came at terrible cost to the United States as well. The militarization and distortion of the economy and the regimentation of society during the Cold War inflicted damage and neglect from which it will take years to recover. In the meantime, America has slipped behind competing economies in some respects, and the credibility of its claim to leadership of the free world has suffered correspondingly. One has to remember that the Cold War cost the United States far more than the Second World War. That helps to explain but by no means fully accounts for the unprecedented trillions of dollars of national debt, the colossal budget deficits, and the crippling gap in the international balance of trade. Along with this there are the present threats to national health, education, environment, and welfare, and the erosion of civil liberties, freedom of speech, and trust in elected leaders, old political parties, and old institutions of self-government.

I wish it were possible to promise East Europeans who have suffered so long under the corruption, thievery, and privilege of their rulers under one-party government and dictatorship that democracy will relieve them of these evils. But the best one can do is to say that democracy offers the possibility and opportunity for restraining or even diminishing corruption and dishonesty in government, but offers no likelihood of eliminating it. As a historian of the American democracy, I have had to record shocking increases in the level and amount of corruption and dishonesty at times in both the institutions of government and those of the economy—including banks, finance, and corporations of the oldest surviving democracy, and the interlocking relationships between corruption in government and corruption in the economy. I can only hope that the latest and largest upsurge of this affliction will not prove lasting, can be corrected, and will pass away. But I can by no means be sure and can only wish the young democracies better luck in this matter than one of their elders has enjoyed.

Democracy has been variously defined as popular sovereignty, self-government, government by the people. The first three words in the Constitution of the United States, written in 1787, are "We the people," and they are inscribed in much bolder letters than any that follow. But who are "the people"? Or who *were* they? Jefferson declared it "to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." I was

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delighted to hear a workman quote those words in Wenceslaus Square in Prague and read of its repetition elsewhere. But Jefferson did not say what inequalities might happen to all men after creation. He knew, as do we, that the actual governing is done by the few, but he meant that governing should be done by consent of the governed and in their name rather than by divine right as British monarchs once did.

Edmund Morgan concludes in *Inventing the People* (1988) that "the sovereignty of the people" has always been "filled with surprises" ever since its inception in the 1640s. He considers it to be

> a more dynamic fiction than the one it replaced, more capable of serving as a goal to be sought, never attainable, always receding, but approachable and worth approaching. It has continually challenged the governing few to reform the facts of political and social existence to fit the aspirations it fosters. The presumption that social rank should convey a title to political authority was only the first casualty in its reformations, and we have not yet seen the last. The fiction endures. The challenge persists.

The history of democracy in America has been in some measure a casualty list of presumptions of the sort illustrated by the claims of social rank to political authority. The casualty list now includes such presumptions as those of religion, property, sex, race, color, ideology, and political views—and the list continues to grow. As the presumptions of privilege diminish, the categories of people once excluded from political participation play more conspicuous roles. These include not only dreamers, utopians, dissidents, and irreconcilables, but fanatics, zealots, dangerous cultists, and bigots. They are scarcely the best ingredients for political stability or domestic tranquility. Indeed they are the elements on which demagoguery thrives and racial and religious animosities flourish. And yet they have political rights and equality that can only be denied at the cost of democratic principles. Democracy often comes at high cost. But let me repeat once more the words of Alexis de Tocqueville, that while democracy may not be ideal, it is "the only means of preserving freedom," because we are "left with no other alternative than democratic freedom or the tyranny of the Caesars."

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Out of Nowhere

REBECCA LEE YATES

There was a depression in the house
even after '42,
It may have always been that way.
40-watt bulbs—even the moths went elsewhere.

He was a half-breed.
His father walked a Trail of Tears to Oklahoma
where he was born.

In a foxhole, somewhere near Paris,
1918 took a lung.
There were secrets in the rock of his chair,
And he rocked
as if rocking might make a difference.

In '35 he ate dust from bowls instead of wheat,
He watched it sweep the clean, the dreams,
the fields away,
Watched it come in a cloud from nowhere.

When he lit his pipe
the years curled up under his eyes
and me at his feet,
Hanging on the stories and smells on my
grandfather's breath.

Papa John saved money in Prince Albert cans,
Hid them under the henhouse—afraid of
another Market crash,

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we found them when he died.
But it was a car crash that killed him
around a curve on the way to market.
Corn, and blood, and beans all over the road.

It's those things that come from nowhere,
Those things that skill, or will, or wish
Can't stop, or move, or make.
That sadness I never understood
until I lost enough to know,
That sometimes
Rocking makes the only difference.

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Being Jewish

The Endless Quest

OSCAR HANDLIN

SOMETIMES WHEN I WONDER at the source of my idiosyncratic attitudes, so out of accord with the acquisitive spirit about me, I think of my mother who listened secretly at the door while her brothers fed on the learning denied her.

I think also of my father who never had the opportunity to study but always loved to read. "Why?" his brothers asked (who called him *sefer* [book]). And what good would it do to enroll in adult education courses after his retirement?

To know, he said. The phrase with which he answered, embedded in my memory: *Torah Leshmah*—learning for its own sake.

But those were other times and other people.

For me, however, learning meant an identity. Birth made me a Jew, that is, a person who studied out of the desire to grasp the tree of life—that is, to learn.

My deliberate reflections about identity began in the 1960s when I tried to describe the situation of American Jews at Harvard in the 1930s. The essay I then composed grew not only out of what I learned from written sources but also out of personal experience as a student in Cambridge early in the pre-war decade. What I spoke about I had also observed. One of my thoughtful questioners expressed surprise that I had not mentioned some subjects, among them anti-Semitism at Harvard. Nor had I said anything about the Depression or about Marxism, which in retrospect seemed a significant element of the intellectual heritage of that red decade. From the perspective of the 1980s and 1970s, it seemed strange indeed to have entirely neglected those subjects. Yet I was not trying to cover anything up; I had no desire to hide either from my listeners or from myself those aspects of

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Cambridge life that only came to seem important sixty years later. In the perspective of 1934, those problems had not seemed crucial and they had therefore receded from my memory.

I arrived in Harvard Square with the Depression well under way. The aftereffects of the stock-market crash of 1929 had not then subsided; nor had the effects of the bank closings of 1933. I remembered vividly the sight of people lining up outside the banks to withdraw their life savings. I could still recall the unemployed apple sellers at the street corners and the possessions of dispossessed families piled up along the curbs. These familiar elements of the urban landscape reminded me of my own budget's narrow range.

As for myself, I learned in my first year at graduate school to get by on one meal a day—at the Georgian or Waldorf, 35 cents sufficed; and if the call of companionship drew me to a 55-cent feast at Gusties, the satisfaction carried me through the next day's belt tightening. And in an emergency, half a loaf of market rye bread could still unruly pangs of hunger for twenty-four hours at least. Periodically I trudged to the Copley Plaza's Oak Room for a solitary $3.50 feast (solitary because my imprudent peers had not learned how to balance an occasional splurge with rigorous regular discipline).

By then also I became aware of the ramifications of Harvard's Jewish problem. No quotas of any sort governed admissions to the graduate school. And I believed that President Lowell's desire to establish a 20 percent quota for Jewish admissions to the undergraduate college had failed. But more subtle lines recognized differences between Jews and others. The year I roomed in Morris Hall, Bill Woodward, a law student, asked whether the dean's office had checked to learn whether I objected to living with a Methodist. My negative answer puzzled him; he had been asked, he told me, whether he objected to sharing a room with a Jew. Later, as I reviewed course lists and records, it became clear that, quotas or not, without any indication of creed or ethnicity, I could identify about one in five of the names on student lists as Jewish. When the Senior Common Room discussed the makeup of the group of sophomores admitted to Leverett House, the tabulations included data on the number of stars***—with a view to preventing undesirable clustering in any single house. I understood that President Conant's desire to recruit a national student body—the "diversity" of his day—had the effect of narrowing the channels of admission for Jews. Favoritism for the applicants from Utah and Montana left fewer places for boys from Chelsea or the Bronx. Lowell's 20 percent survived unseen.

When it came to faculty members, ambiguity clouded the situation—not in the case of Harry Wolfson whose title, teaching, and

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personality made a clear statement of his identity, nor of figures from the recent past like Leo Wiener and Charles Gross; but among contemporaries no clear marks of identity set off Paul Sachs of fine arts, who inhabited Norton woods, or Edwin J. Cohn, the biochemist who lived on Brattle Street. Whether the logician Henry M. Sheffer, the economist Seymour Harris, and the literary critic Harry T. Levin were Jewish or not mattered little in an environment that emphasized the quality of scholarship above all.

Certainly by the standards of the 1990s there was anti-Semitism at Harvard. I could never have gotten into a final club; I could never even have gotten into a first club. In fact, I knew nothing whatever about club life. Had I known anything about it, I would most likely have pitied rather than envied those who frittered life away in games rather than enjoyed the riches of Widener. Therein I and my contemporaries differed from the "commuters" of a later generation who whimpered about "class exclusions." On the occasions when I ran into some "clubbies" on Mt. Auburn Street, where the J. Press-type tailors clothed them, I rather felt sorry for them, anxiety-ridden by the need to appear proper, yet obsessed with the eagerness to get as much as possible from their relative freedom before they surrendered to life's inescapable drudgery.

Depression and prejudice threatened my career in ways that I simply shrugged off. When I discussed my plans with Arthur Meier Schlesinger, the distinguished historian and my revered teacher who would be my guide for the next six years, he expressed satisfaction that I proposed to work at Harvard and approved of my commitment to study, but warned me that, as a Jew, I could never expect to get a job in an American university. He was just telling me what he believed at the time was a fact of life (although I later discovered he exaggerated in order to make the warning more emphatic). But I paid no attention to prospective difficulties, which I rather took for granted. In some ways the Depression actually made my situation easier; there were no jobs for Jews or for anyone else, for that matter. The warning that a Jew would face difficulty in finding a position seemed no big deal. It was difficult for anyone to get an appointment, even if not stigmatized by ethnicity. I recall the excitement when Kenneth W. Porter finally got a place, although by then author of a well-regarded published monograph, and a respectable poet to boot. Among the terms of his appointment, we heard, was the provision that he not draw the shades of his residence lest that seem evidence of nefarious goings-on within. My personal situation just differed in degree from that of everyone else. I did not expect that a teaching position would await me once a doctorate rewarded my six years of preparation.

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I knew therefore that some people managed better than others, not particularly as a result of superior virtue but because some lived one way and some another, which was not a reason why one should either try or not try. If Dwight Morrow Jr., as a first-year graduate student, could afford to hire a secretary of his own, that was just the way the world was.

I can recall even later, after I had started to teach and while I looked for an apartment or house, people who met me at the door, after a referral from the University, chatted very cordially, then became awkward, even embarrassed when they asked about religion, which occasionally led to the apologetic statement, "Well, of course we couldn't take in a Jew." That was evidence of something, but not really of hostility, so much as of awkwardness or embarrassment as well as of regret, for the conversations were invariably cordial.

It is difficult to understand, in retrospect, that such rebuffs did not seem very important, or even surprising or relevant. If not Bates Street then Forest Street would do as well. I—and I suppose many people like me—then thought that that was what we could expect in the world as it was—a world laden with prejudice and dense with biased people; and we had to take account of that as a simple fact of life.

The same attitude applied to the Depression. We dated its start in 1931, although its roots went back to the stock-market crash of 1929. In the early 1930s, the Depression got ever worse as unemployment mounted. There were no jobs, no wages—none whatever! That general situation eased my personal position. Blame every failing on the business cycle.

Those circumstances of my early youth revealed something about the character of the Jewish community within which I grew up. New York was far too inclusive a designation; even Brooklyn covered too much territory. Mapleton, the term we used, had only recently acquired its identity when we moved in—given its name by a real estate developer when the Sea Beach Line located a station stop at Twentieth Avenue. Since it lacked a legal identity, it lacked also precise boundaries, except insofar as Bay Parkway set its limits to the south and Washington Cemetery to the east. Almost all the residents took the subway to jobs in midtown Manhattan, forty minutes away. A sprinkling of synagogues, a small movie house, and a cluster of shops provided all the services needed.

Two features were particularly important to me. Living in Mapleton I did not have to worry about my sense of identity, about who I was or about why I did what I did. My family and the small community of which I was a part and the bigger community of which that was a part established all that for me. My situation was a fact,

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given, taken for granted. It was not good; it was not bad, not a matter of choice or election, but rather an aspect of my personality and character, just as was the fact that I was short not tall, chubby not thin. That was the way I was.

An even more important circumstance established by the milieu in which I grew up was the rule of life that one had to recognize the world as it was and not as it should be. We all could see clearly in visions what the world should be like—a world of justice and righteousness and equity. But we were in no danger of mistaking vision for reality. My parents often talked about *meschiach's tsytn*, the times of the messiah, by which they referred to an era governed by true, absolute criteria that set off right from wrong. That was the way it would be. But at a later time, not now. Meanwhile, a hard abrasive world left no room for illusions. Problems such as discrimination and poverty were confining, could be painful, could lead to other problems, but they were not surprising, and they set the terms within which people like us had to exist in the world as it was.

The world as it was also accounted for depressions. We wished there were no Depression and none of its attendant difficulties. We could imagine many nice ways in which the world could function without joblessness, breadlines, evictions. But we knew that in this world as it was depressions came unbidden, and that required us to act in a way that would prevent the business cycle or whatever caused those downturns from dominating our lives. Recognize reality as an obstacle to surmount; expect that not everyone would be able to make it; but try anyway.

Of course, in 1932–1933 people like me were also aware of Hitler and knew what was happening in Germany and could even guess—just barely—what would follow in the next decade. The events in central Europe could not quite surprise a youth familiar with Kishinev and blood libel stories, with Cossack depredations and incidents going back to Chmielnitzki and Torquemada. It did shock us that those ancient passions erupted in Germany, one of the great centers of Western civilization, home to science and learning for more than a century. Accustomed as we were to thinking by Enlightenment criteria of development and progress, we took it as a serious blow to observe a progressive modern country moving along the course of anti-Semitism. But even that, while shocking, was not altogether surprising because we understood that *b'chol dor*, in every generation, there had always been a Hitler, there always would be. The appearance of a twentieth-century Haman in Western Europe, surprising though it was, did not lie outside the realm of expectations of those who rejected illusions and accepted reality. American Jews who then lived in

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a world of great hopes but of few illusions should have assimilated that danger, at least intellectually.

In the 1930s, moreover, Jewish life, at least in Mapleton, still rested on a firm theistic base. Most of the five million American Jews in 1934 believed in God, not in an abstract theological or philosophical sense but in a personal and immanent sense. Certainly that was the case on Twentieth Avenue. My uncle was a very pious, simple man, not learned but full of faith. During the week he went to his job as a capmaker in the factory. On the Sabbath he appeared at the lectern in the synagogue as the *shatz (sholiach Tsibur)*—emissary of the community—and when he let forth his *El moleh rachamim*—Lord, full of compassion—it was easy to believe that his plea would reach its destination.

Once I qualified as a college student, he talked to me as an adult, seriously. I remember on one occasion he told me he believed, with the utmost sincerity, that if all the Jews in the world, on a single day at a single moment, all of them unanimously, would utter a cry—that would surely reach the heart of God and that would be the end of Hitler. But, of course, when Hitler survived the appointed hour, my uncle was able to say regretfully, "You see, some people did not join in the prayer."

That was not funny. My uncle and the great majority of American Jews in the 1920s and 1930s believed not simply in the deity as an abstract conception, but in the deity who had a direct personal relationship with human beings, who could address Him and whom He could address. That faith eased many explanations. Any difficulties encountered in the 1930s originated not in divine but in human failings. Throughout history, God had frequently expressed his wrath with the descendents of Adam and especially with His chosen people. And He had punished them. And if something went wrong, as it often did, it did not occur to Jews of that generation to consider it the fault of God, or of nature; rather it pointed to some failing in themselves, of which they could recall many instances. Which, of course was also what the seventeenth-century American Puritans always did in their jeremiads.

These habits of thought in Mapleton, as in Massachusetts Bay, endowed the universe with rationality and purpose. Nothing happened by accident, nor by some strange random combination of events, but according to God's will—that is, according to the divine plan, whether or not known or understood.

No doubt in the 1930s some secular Jews contested the field, purchased the *Forward* rather than the *Tag* or *Morgen Zhumal.* Important as they were intellectually, those people about whom Irving Howe wrote in *World of Our Fathers* were not numerous, at least not in

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Mapleton. Socialists and Marxists of various kinds, they had left orthodoxy but nevertheless transferred into their own ways of thinking and acting kinds of faith connected with their antecedents and especially some sense of justice and purpose that enabled them to think of a coherent future.

The social context gave form to those defining characteristics of the bygone time of my boyhood. This community consisted preponderantly of working people, women as well as men, after they got to America as well as before they left the Old World. The term "working people," as they defined it, did not take in only the proletarians, the factory operatives in the garment trades and the shoe industry, the usual cast of characters in the familiar drama of settlement. The term encompassed also the small shopkeepers, the peddlers, and numerous artisans with various levels of skill who had in common the fact that they toiled with their hands and that they led hard and marginal lives, characteristics they shared with other working people at the time. Modern students who look back at the conditions of life and labor then cannot understand how such families survived. Juggle estimates of standards and cost of living as they would, observers could not imagine how the poor could get by. But the poor had stratagems of their own (as I knew from my own student experience), and they did survive by dint of hardship and desperation and extra work. Also credit: the neighborhood grocer would not let a family do without bread or milk for a shortage of cash; accounts carried in the book could stretch out for months.

Very likely the capacity to carry on emanated in part from recollections of the far worse conditions in the lands they had left. For although by then some of their co-religionists had inhabited the North American continent for almost three hundred years, and although some of their communities in many parts of the country had existed through the nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of American Jews were recent newcomers. In the 1930s, perhaps well over 60 percent were either foreign born or the children of the foreign born—in many cases, the product of immigration, mostly from Eastern Europe, a vague area that included many dissimilar districts stretching from Lithuania, through Silesia, Rumania, Galicia, and the Ukraine. Dissimilar though they were, these regions and their people shared common features, notably poverty. Furthermore, the migrants were a select part of the population, probably the poorest of the poor. The well-to-do or even moderately prosperous in Vilna, Warsaw, or Odessa stayed where they were. But the young and the placeless, who saw no future to remaining, departed and they formed the bulk of the

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immigrants to America: people willing to take a chance, willing to cut themselves off, at least temporarily from their backgrounds. Back in the old country, the life of East European Jewry had functioned within self-contained rural villages and self-contained urban neighborhoods, preponderantly orthodox, though divided among various sects and set apart by national and linguistic differences. Yiddish gave them a common mode of communication that did not override distinctions based on intonation and pronunciation and even cuisine.

Most residents of Mapleton referred to themselves as Litwaks (Lithuanians), although probably few actually had roots in Lithuania, having come from Poland, the Ukraine, and White Russia. No subtlety to these affiliations, the overwhelming consideration was to differentiate themselves from the Galicians—miserably poor, strange intonation to their Yiddish, and unspeakable in their cuisine. They lived not in Mapleton but in such remote parts of Brooklyn as Brownsville.

Altogether apart were the people we called Syrians—mostly natives of North Africa. Certainly they were Jewish, but what kind of Jews they were we could not tell; they knew no Yiddish and their heavily spiced cuisine rested on rice rather than on bread or potatoes. We did not welcome their kids in our street gangs. (Years later, I learned to my astonishment that they rather looked down on us.) The son of the lawyer (Jewish by the name on his shingle) also had nothing to do with us. There must have been something wrong with him, we thought, because he never played in the street and he attended a private school that charged tuition rather than a public school like the rest of us. By contrast, a few Italians fit right in.

The street provided boys a setting for their social life. Mercifully free of automobile traffic, Sixty-second Street welcomed ballplayers in tolerable weather, friendly vestibules and entries sheltered the poker and checker games at other times. The accepted code of behavior emphasized loyalty (stick up for one another), no cheating (takes the fun out of it), and equality (of strong and weak, of smart and dumb).

Finders, keepers! The general rule of the street applied to nickels, pennies, and other unidentifiable objects, but not to bats or hats left behind by boys we knew. No one, to my knowledge, transgressed. Get what you can, but do it right, not by lies or cheating. More than seventy years later, the inhibitions bind me still.

Much later, after I had left Mapleton, I observed, as a first-year Harvard graduate student, one of my fellows deliberately misshelve a book required for reading in a course we both took, so that he alone could use it. I had no desire to attract attention but I knew the tactic from of old at the New York Public Library, where all books at the day's end went back to the delivery desk. To avoid the waste of time

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for retrieval the next day, the unscrupulous hid their volumes among the reference works shelved at the sides of the reading room. In Widener, therefore, after the culprit left, I restored his volume to its proper place, but never forgot or forgave the sneak.

I was not quite thirteen when I left Mapleton and I did so not in order to cut myself off but rather to cement the ties to that community. It did not work out that way; the effort to re-enforce the attachment only destroyed it.

Having moved on from Junior High School, I wanted something other than to proceed to New Utrecht High School as everyone else did. Though it required sacrifice in income foregone, parents urged their offspring on to this entry to college, reckoning it the only hope for an otherwise unthinkable rise in status. Despite the inclinations of my mother and father, that was not the path I chose to follow. Aim high. Nothing less would do than to strike at once for the very top, bypass high school, even college, proceed directly to study for the rabbinate. Never mind my spotty preparation, my imperfect Hebrew, my nonexistent Aramaic. Plunge in; nothing but the best—that is, the most difficult—would do. Besides, my sincere eagerness to learn about God would carry me through.

What maneuvers gained me a place I do not know. My father took me one morning to the Yeshiva (Isaac Elchanan, it was called) on East Broadway in Manhattan, where I talked to various elderly gentlemen and expressed my eagerness to learn. Come, they said.

Alas, a school was a school; I learned as little there as in earlier classrooms. The initial excitement faded, as I sank into a dreary round of classes, Jewish studies in the mornings, the regular (secular) sessions in the afternoons, punctuated by two breaks. Liberated from the schedules of home and of Mapleton, I was on my own. If only I knew what to do with my freedom.

Every morning I left early enough to walk over to the Twentieth Avenue Station of the Sea Beach Line, buying a tabloid en route. Precisely at 8:04 A.M., the express rolled in, every seat by then taken. But I had learned to wedge myself into a space opposite the door where I could ride and read undisturbed by the hordes who poured in at each stop. Soon the line sank below the street level, plunged into successive tunnels by places whose names I recognized but which I did not know—Church, DeKalb, Atlantic, Pacific—and before long I braced myself to struggle out at Canal Street where I entered a vast flow all making connections, with just enough time to catch the eastbound train; then two stops to my destination. No dawdling at that point; a steep climb up to the street, then a hasty walk along East

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Broadway, and finally a rush to the third story of the old building out of which the Yeshiva would move the next year.

Talmud, always the morning's first subject, day after day baffled me, although Rabbi Wind I later recalled as a good and sensitive teacher. I understood the strange format of the volumes; and, for the time being, disregarded the marginalia and the footnotes. But the structure of the whole escaped me. Always in my other books, chapter 1 led into chapter 2 and so on. Even in the Bible the start came with Genesis—In the beginning, and then one generation begat another to provide a linear chronological structure to the whole. Here I could not even make out the relationship of one tractate to another—Baba Kama, Baba Mezia—topics interlaced, no discernible sequence, and mostly concerned with cases of disputed property: two men claim one cow or one cloak. Not the questions or answers I thought I sought.

What had those cases to do with faith in God? My initial excitement faded; and I learned little thereafter. Boredom set in, fertile territory for daydreams and for mischief. When I went down, by the long hall where the big boys studied in earnest groups, I tried to locate myself in one such future cluster. It did not work out even in imagination; and no alternative vision materialized. Dawdling on the way home, for I had no set time of return, I tramped the streets, peeped in at the pool room where (in those pre-radio days) sporting results came in by wire, then took to dropping in for an hour or so at the branch library.

Reading, the one addiction encouraged at home, revealed a way out. I must have been six or so when we lived in West Haven and my teacher dropped by to sell my mother a big fat "college book." Ten dollars (a fortune) then brought us more than 1,000 closely packed pages of *The Circle of Knowledge* (Boston, 1916) edited by Henry W. Ruoff—a vast compendium that included the histories of all peoples, ancient and modern, but also descriptions of all the continents and their denizens, beasts, reptiles and birds, as well as of the stars in their constellations and the rocks in the earth's crust. I spent hours on end in the perusal of the closely packed columns—an approved activity that earned me exemption from many family chores. No one knew that part of my reading time also went to secondhand dime novels—Merriwells, Nick Carter, Buffalo Bill—a recourse to which I turned because the local library on Eighteenth Avenue proved but a meager resource, long confining me to the children's section and then limiting the number of books I could withdraw at any one time.

In Manhattan I roamed where I wished. The eccentricities of shelving brought me first to modern drama within which I confronted right off twelve volumes of the collected works of Henrik Ibsen, from

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among which I drew Brand, a strange brooding drama about the quest for God, quite in accord with my own mood. I then went back to Volume One through the historical plays about the Norse warriors of Helgeland and on to the less interesting modern social dramas. From Ibsen it was but a few steps to the grim Weavers of Gerhart Hauptmann. Thereafter I browsed indiscriminately and eagerly hastened to glut myself with learning's golden gifts..

In June my association with the Yeshiva ended, to my relief and I am sure to the relief of my teachers. That left me no alternative but high school. However, I never reverted to the discipline of home or of Mapleton. For a year or two I attended evening Hebrew classes in Manhattan; and New Utrecht could only control its 8,000 students with an elaborate system of passes easily evaded by refuge in the music practice rooms or the school library, which no one else seemed to use. As a result much of the day found me on my own and, more often than not, immersed in a book. From drama, I drifted to history, the subject I early marked out for my own. Poetry slipped by me for I had not yet overcome the revulsion caused by an overzealous teacher who insisted that the students in her class recite memorized lines—punctuation and all. I can still hear the little sixth-grade voice squeaking:

Capital Tyger, *comma, capital* Tyger, *comma,* burning bright *comma, capital* In the forests of the night.

Perversity for years kept me away from Shakespeare after a dogmatic instructor flatly anointed the Bard as the greatest poet who ever lived. That blank in my soul persisted for years. Still eager to learn about such subjects as God and death, I kept fishing for appropriate sentiment in the likes of *Thanatopsis,* until after many a false start I met and memorized "Lycidas," which added little to my knowledge but indelibly implanted a sense of the rhythm of language that to this day burdens me with the compulsion to fit words to the inner music.

Meanwhile my adventures in education continued, mostly in libraries. The transfer from New Utrecht to Brooklyn College made little difference, except that it brought me closer to Montague Street and the central, little-used but superb collection of the Brooklyn Public Library. The Pratt Institute Library also lay within reach; and, when necessary, I could ride up to Forty-Second Street and to intermittent battles with the librarians there who vigilantly sought to guard their books against overuse.

In the course of my manic browsings, I shackled myself with insistent taboos. I would only read whole sets: from volume one on. Condorcet's *Esquisse,* which I needed for my work on the Enlightenment appeared in Volume Ten of his complete works. Nothing to it

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but to wade through the nine irrelevant tomes. The other taboo was even more destructive. I considered it beneath my dignity any longer to use translations as I had in my callow youth with Ibsen and Hauptmann. Some day I would know Russian: meanwhile Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy could wait.

So, too, could the issues of my Jewish identity. Plausible though it was to seek answers in my interest in history, it did not work out that way. The dull old accounts such as that of Heinrich Graetz, dusty in tone, evaded rather than confronted issues. Vaguely I had heard of the work of S. M. Dubnow, but did not actually lay hands on it. And my interest in the eighteenth-century enlightenment led me to wonder about intersections with the Haskallah or about parallels between Protestant pietism and Hasidism. But I could not get a grip on such subjects. (Nor has anyone done so in the intervening decades.) Moreover, all through college I was trying to master dialectical philosophy through Marxism.

File but don't forget. Through those years the list of books I needed to read grew and especially when I edged into medieval history with Werner Sombart's concept of *Bedarfsdeckung* (self-sufficiency), which might have established the setting for the shtetl; and the sources of monasticism described by Montalembert stirred up nice unanswered questions about the contrast with the unknown terrain of Jewish mysticism.

I could not answer but persistently asked the question, "How did the Jews fit in?"

I could wait patiently for the answer because the libraries insistently confronted me with fresh materials, so that, however much I learned, I thereby only uncovered the broadened areas of my ignorance, of how much yet remained to be learned.

Practice remained embedded in the links to Mapleton, or at least to Brooklyn. Fragrances in my mother's kitchen evoked formulaic phrases associated with holy days and temporarily effaced questions of meaning. But with the passage of time the pungency of familiar fragrances faded, cousins dispersed, and the 62nd Street boys moved out. Residual vague memories could not sustain the commitment to once familiar practices.

The changing social context ceased to sustain the old faith. If they did not become physicians, lawyers, or teachers, my contemporaries became bureaucrats or business people—not however, workers. They moved away from Brooklyn or the Bronx as they did from Chelsea or Dorchester and settled in Riverdale, Lynnbrook, or Brookline. The percentage of foreign-born among them dropped precipitously and

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their tastes and ideas merged with those of other middle-class Americans. Writing in *Race and Nationality in American Life* (1957), I noted the general tendency to attrition in such primary communities as Mapleton and predicted an emotional displacement to ethnic nationalism, a prediction that surprised a naive reviewer, although one validated thereafter by events around the world.

In the United States, Jews remained affiliated with temples or synagogues, but the theistic content drained away except as a quaint, somewhat comic presence in *Fiddler on the Roof.* Affiliation persisted if not as a religious communion, then as a loose ethnic grouping, its vulnerability evident in a rising rate of intermarriage and a declining birthrate.

Ironically, emergence from enclosed immigrant communities and immersion in the wider general culture effaced the old traditional barriers that had once shaped the lives of Mapleton Jews and thereupon exposed their children to the whirlwind unleashed by sensate elements in the music, the art, and the literature about them, thereby threatening the values that had earlier sustained my generation. Disproportionately represented in the well-to-do sectors of society, the Jews suffered more than others from the problems of affluence, among them the drive to seek gratification in immediate sensual pleasures. The recognition and acceptance of ethnicity's legitimacy and the disappearance of overt discrimination exposed complicated problems of how to locate oneself in the world, for the burden of choice thereupon shifted to the individuals who made decisions while often under pressure from quite incongruent forces.

The strong sentimental interest in Jewishness, like the more general American revival of interest in ethnicity, exposed a condition no longer grounded in tradition and therefore taken for granted, but rather one to be sought out, nurtured and cultivated by people uncertain of how to locate themselves in the world—itself an ironic commentary on the marked demographic trend reflected in a declining birthrate and a stable or even shrinking population.

Traditional Jews, like those of Mapleton, had affixed their most severe condemnation to the expletive *epikoros,* which bore the sense of renegade or traitor. Few who used the word knew its derivation from the Greek *epicurean,* the ancient Hellenistic heresy that justified the gratification of sensate wants considered ends in themselves. Sadly, the evidence mounted of the inroads of such impulses in American Jewish life.

In the 1960s, Jews, like other Americans, had cast about for an explanation for their separateness that went beyond common descent

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from earlier generations of immigrants, one strong enough to resist homogenization in the powerful solvents of the common culture. In the quest, Jews fixed upon Israel and the Holocaust, neither until then salient in most of their lives.

Before the war, the ritual repetition of the wish for a prompt return to the Holy Land assumed that it would come in God's good time and not through any human agency. Only a small minority then had actively enlisted in the Zionist movement. Interest grew after 1945, fueled by the need to do something about the mass of displaced persons and the unwillingness of the West, including the United States, to accommodate more than a handful of settlers. Concern with Palestine and with fund-raising fell within the scope of philanthropy. The achievement of indpendence and the wars for Israel's survival heightened emotions; and pride in the achievements of the young state endured beyond the attack on Suez and despite the hostility of the Eisenhower Administration.

American Jews gave Israel unstinting diplomatic, financial, and emotional support. But *aliyah*, the actual participation in building the new country that Israelis most desired, did not attract a population in the United States, increasingly native born, middle-class, and suburban, remote from the pioneering life of the Negev desert or the dry hills of Galilee.

I accepted an invitation to discuss these issues at an "ideological conference" as a non-Zionist guest of the Israeli government in Jerusalem in August 1957. A long trip in a piston plane, shared among others with forty orphans, brought me late to an almost deserted airport. Despite the good intentions of the conference organizers and of the government of Israel, I had to fend for myself, find a taxi and lodgings in the early morning of the Sabbath. It could be done, but not simply.

When I finally emerged from the hotel after a fitful night's sleep, I had the city almost to myself and wandered about in the silence of the seemingly deserted streets. No traffic, no cars, no buses, not even pedestrians; shops closed, stillness everywhere, with only the occasional chant through open synagogue doors. Despite the heat from the rising sun, I felt a pang of envy—quiet, the place verging on holiness.

The conference itself proved anything but placid. David Ben-Gurion, the chief Israeli protagonist, had the best of the intellectual argument as he challenged the visitors to give up their American passports and throw their lot in with the nation-building pioneers. Not myself a Zionist, I felt no need to respond but I did attempt to explain that Americans, though supportive of the cause, felt not the urge for personal involvement but rather something closer to the admiration

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lavished on objects in a museum, admirable for what they were but not for use.

The next decade thrust the Holocaust to the foreground. Certainly the tortured had acquired the right to scream as did their surviving kin. And the need to express outrage increased rather than diminished with the passage of time, stoked by the Eichmann trial, by highly publicized sentimental fiction, movies, and museum displays, which stirred emotions, but no sense of identification. That happened to them! But not to us! They, in retrospect became saintly loving communities, devoted to scholarship—forgetting the scandals that repeatedly rocked Hasidic courts, the occasional dubious business practices and the violent arguments that shook such families as I. J. Singer's *The Brothers Ashkenazi*, and the gross self-indulgence of Sholem Aleichem's vacationing wives in the fashionable spas. And particularly when discussions shied away from theological explanations of evil or blamed the disaster on a bad gene in German culture, forgetting the French Cagoulards or the Austrians, Ukrainians, and Poles, or for that matter the four million hooded American klansmen, the Holocaust too becomes a museum, a badge of identity, not an instrument of understanding.

I ask, "What has that to do with the world of Marjorie Morningstar, or of Portnoy, or of Mr. Sammler?"—a world occupied in slurping down the mass media's slush. Or, for that matter, with the world of those who choose another form of identification—in the eighteenth-century black cloaks on Jerusalem streets, or in the sober suits of Crown Heights or East New York, or even in the train to Arosa. Now and again my heart goes out to one of the *chozrim*, shy young men who seek to return to the warm identity of an affiliation they had never really known. I sympathize with their longing but cannot be sure they will be content. Let them try. The Jewish ultraorthodox, like the Islamic fundamentalists or Mormon and Adventist missionaries, or the Moonies or Hare Krishnas know they miss something, but know not what.

I therefore remain outside all those currents. Once I raised my sights beyond the limits of Mapleton and New York, a quite different world came into view. Working through the papers of Louis Marshall and the Joint Distribution Committee, I glimpsed a sense of responsibility and identification that ran beyond the neighborhood community; and, later, when my interest in migrations brought me to talks about refugees with Zachariah Schuster in Paris, with Moses B. Amzalak in Lisbon, and with Elly Kadoorie in Hong Kong, I groped toward a sense of *am olam*, a universal people tied to no terrestrial

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space. But I could not connect that sense to a providential messianic design, as Kaufmann Kohler had earlier in the century.

I therefore remain apart from all those currents. My own questions, defined in Mapleton, had led me instead into the endless quest for learning that I still pursue. And, alas, there is more now to learn than *The Circle of Knowledge* encompassed—long before the Egyptians and Assyrians of whom the Bible spoke, the Minoans and the Hittites erected places of worship and devotion. It is not easy to find meaning in their experience. Nor to say anything about the mysteries of out there, beyond Venus and Betelgeuse. The endless quest still occupies me.

Sonya Rudikoff

(1927 – 1997)

Contributor, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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Tentative Prolegomena on the Two Ways

WILLIAM AIKEN

There are two ways to read a book:
One is to hold it at fourteen inches
using your eyes to search through the leaves.
The other is to let the voice wrap around you.

When Augustine met Jerome,
long after the episode with the pears,
he was astonished that a man could hold a book
and yet be silent.

It was only after this that he developed
his theory of the blighted will,
making the murmur no longer admissible.
There are two ways to embrace

(one can study this at airports).
We can hold the person before us
dazzled by their being,
reading deeply and marveling—

or we can let their arms wrap around us.
It is clear from this
there were always two trees in the garden.
(There is Doris Day and Whitney Houston,
    early and late Van Gogh.)

According to Rostand
there are two ways
of holding a bird.
One allows it to fly to another kingdom.

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(Shakespeare let Mercutio fly away.
He left Romeo behind,
wanting to be a glove on a hand,
inured to envelopment.)

When one announces a loss—a king or a dog—
we think about getting a new one.
Where the heart is not touched
this is natural,

memory does not trail along,
like a broken foot.
But there is another way,
when you have walked with that dog for many years.

There are two ways to spread a fire.
We can make things so dry around us
that what happens in the valley
will go right up the mountain like a fuse.

Or we can spread a distillate
that moistens everything,
a bold deliberate act
as though one could take the consequences.

There are always these removes
from the thing itself.
The fire and the spreading,
the word and the voice,

the bird and the dog.
It is a question
of being engulfed.
I wish I could make this easier for you.

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Something to Sing About

America's Great Lyricists

PHILIP FURIA

When Irving Caesar, the man who wrote the words to such classic songs as "Swanee" and "Tea for Two," died on December 17, 1996, it marked the end of a remarkable era in American song. At 101 years old, Caesar had been the last living member of a group of lyricists who were all born within a year of each other in 1895 or 1896: Ira Gershwin ("Someone to Watch Over Me"), Lorenz Hart ("Isn't It Romantic?"), Yip Harburg ("Over the Rainbow"), Oscar Hammerstein ("Some Enchanted Evening"), Leo Robin ("Thanks for the Memory"), Buddy DeSylva ("Somebody Loves Me"), Howard Dietz ("Dancing in the Dark"), and Andy Razaf ("Ain't Misbehavin'"). These gifted craftsmen wrote the words to most of the songs we call standards, songs that sound as fresh today as when they were written fifty, sixty, even seventy years ago. Heard in contemporary jazz and cabaret performances, Broadway revivals, or on Hollywood sound tracks, these evergreens are the closest thing America has to a living body of classical music.

Just to name the titles of some of their songs—"April in Paris," "Embraceable You," "Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered"—raises the inevitable question: "Why *don't* they write songs like that anymore?" Maybe it's because they don't write songs the same way anymore. Nowadays, performers write the lyrics and music for their own songs, but in what has been called the Golden Age of American Song (from the 1920s to the 1950s), performers performed—period. Songs were written exclusively by songwriters, who usually worked in teams—a composer and a lyricist. The answer to the perennial question about which came first is that it was usually the music, or at least the musical germ of a song. "I hit on a new tune," George Gershwin once explained with characteristic ease, "and play it for Ira and he hums it all

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over the place until he gets an idea for a lyric. Then we work the thing out together." It seems simple, but, of course, it was profoundly complex—particularly for the lyricists.

Ira Gershwin called lyric writing a "mosaic" art—finding the precise syllables, words, and phrases that fit into the notes of a given melody. Known among songwriters as "The Jeweler," he said that his craft required "the infinite patience of a gemsetter." Gershwin, like his friend Yip Harburg and other lyricists, had started out as a poet, but the transition to fitting words to music took years of apprenticeship—on a very full training schedule. Sometimes it took all night to find a single word. Once, Ira Gershwin had to check into a hotel room for three days to find a setting for his brother's tricky string of staccato notes. What he came up with—"Come to papa, come to papa, do"—gave "Embraceable You" that perfect match between words and music that is the hallmark of a great song.

The lyricist's words were the glue that fused music and language into that hybrid art of song. It was the lyricist who made a song "memorable" by stitching together subtle rhymes that wove themselves into the listener's mind, as Ira Gershwin's do in "The Man I Love":

> *Some* day he'll *come* along—the man I love . . .
> He'll look at me and *smile—I'll*
> understand *and*
> in a little *while*
> he'll take my *hand*

Another trick of the trade was to make the lyric "singable" with long, open vowels a singer could lean on, like Yip Harburg's in "Over the Rainbow":

> Sk*ies* are bl*ue*
> and the dr*ea*ms
> that *you* dare to dr*ea*m
> r*ea*lly d*o* come tr*ue*

Above all, the lyricist had to give the song a distinctive "curve" that would set it apart from the thousands of other love songs. The lyricist had to solve the problem that Ira Gershwin and Yip Harburg (who almost never wrote the words "I love you") put in a song title: "What Can You Say in a Love Song That Hasn't Been Said Before?" In "The Man I Love," that solution came in the skewed verbs of the opening line. A lesser lyricist would have written "Some day *he'll* come along—the man *I'll* love," but Ira Gershwin makes the lover of the future seem already present: "Some day *he'll* come along—the man *I* love." Yip

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Harburg's "curve" in "April in Paris" was to sidestep the clichéd situation of a lover sitting in Paris and remembering an old flame. Instead, he creates a character who has never been in love—"I never missed a warm embrace"—but, in an even greater tribute to the power of Paris in the spring, wishes he had, so that now he *could* have something to remember.

Lyrics are truly a distinctive literary art form calling for invention, craft, and compression. The lyric must be crafted within an unyielding matrix of musical feelings; "Embraceable You" and "April in Paris" both run a complex emotional gamut in the space of only sixty-five words. Still, despite their extraordinary artistry, lyricists are the unsung heroes of popular song. We sometimes speak of a "Gershwin" song or a "Kern" song, overlooking the fact that Ira's or Yip's words are inseparable from their music. (Try humming a "Gershwin tune"—say, "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off"—without thinking of Ira's "You say either and I say eyether." Or an "Arlen" song like "It's Only a Paper Moon" without thinking of Yip Harburg's "It's a Barnum and Bailey world.") Composers have always recognized the importance of the lyricist—"A song without words," said Jule Styne, "is just a piece of music." For the rest of us, however, the lyricist is too often the forgotten man of popular song. Dorothy Hammerstein finally tired of such neglect and, hearing someone refer to "Ol' Man River" as a great "Kern" song, pointed out that Jerome Kern had only written *dum dum dum da*—her husband had written "Ol' Man River."

Intricate, demanding, inglorious—no wonder so few practiced the lyricist's craft with success. Those pioneers of American song who were born in 1895 or 1896 came from remarkably similar backgrounds. The children of immigrants, practically all were Jews who grew up in New York and learned their English on the streets. "The street, not the home, was your life" Harburg recalled. "Your parents spoke no English. Down on the street you were being Americanized, but in a special ghetto way. Parents were very proud of children who spoke English and could interpret for them. This put the parents in an inferior position." Nothing impresses upon a child the power of language more than his ability to speak it better than his parents, particularly in a city where, by 1900, three-fourths of the population were immigrants.

The New York public schools fostered the immigrant children's facility with language. "I liked school because of the acting, the drama," Harburg said. "Basically, I loved the English language, the poetry." Poetry then was not the precious study it sometimes is now, but a daily exercise in dramatic, oral performance. One by one, students would troop to the front of the room to recite "The Village

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Blacksmith" or "The Wreck of the Hesperus," replete with dramatic gestures. Harburg once invited his parents to a school recitation contest where he won a prize. "They wept at my 'Gunga Din' and Tennyson's 'Lady Claire.' Those were the beginnings, the roots of my passion for rhymes."

That passion was tempered by having to write poetry in school as well as having to read, memorize, and recite it—and not the gushy effusions of free verse we elicit from students today but, as Harburg described it, "a rigorous training in the classical poetic forms. We (I, Larry, Oscar) were well-versed in the ballad, the triolet, the rondo, the villanelle." How many high school and college students today—even those who admit to writing poetry—would even know those poetic forms, much less be able to write them? What makes these forms so demanding is that they came from the poetic tradition of a rhyme-rich language. In French, there are fifty-one rhymes for *amour*; in English, *love* rhymes only with *dove, above, glove, shove,* and, as a last resort, *of.* Trying to master the intricate rhyming patterns of the villanelle or rondeau in such a rhyme-poor language as English was rigorous training indeed for future lyricists who would have to set words to the tricky rhythms of an Arlen or Gershwin melody. "We were highly disciplined," Harburg said proudly. "We were never permitted to use an oracular rhyme like *home* and *tone.*" For them, a line like "Ain't that a *shame*—my tears fell like *rain*" would be, literally, unthinkable.

Poetry wasn't confined to the classroom. All the big New York papers carried regular poetry columns, such as F.P.A.'s (Franklin Pierce Adams) "Conning Tower" in the *New York World.* In these columns, amateur as well as professional versifiers, such as Witter Bynner, skewered traditional poetic themes:

> If I were only dafter,
> I might be making hymns
> To the liquor of your laughter
> And the lacquer of your limbs.

Years later, such deft poetic daftness would be echoed in lyrics by young writers like Leo Robin:

> Venus de Milo was noted for her charms,
> but, strictly between us,
> you're cuter than Venus
> and what's more—you got arms!

"We were living," Yip Harburg exulted, "in a time of literate revelry in the New York daily press—F.P.A., Russell Crouse, Don Marquis,

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Alexander Woollcott, Dorothy Parker, Bob Benchley. We wanted to be part of it."

That longing brought Ira Gershwin and Yip Harburg together in high school, where they wrote light verse for the school newspaper, signing off as "Yip" and "Gersh"; they continued their poetry column in college at CCNY. Seated next to each other alphabetically, they found they shared a love of poetry, and when Harburg confided that his favorite book of light verse was William Schwenck Gilbert's *Bab Ballads,* Ira coolly inquired, "You know, of course, those 'poems' are song lyrics?" "There's music to them?" inquired Harburg. "Sure is," Ira told him and then invited his new friend home to listen to *H.M.S. Pinafore* on the Gershwin family Victrola. "There were all the lines I knew by heart," Harburg exclaimed, "I was dumbfounded, staggered."

Harburg dated his ambition to become a lyricist from that moment, but such hopes, given the nature of American songwriting at the time, should have been doomed from the start. When Gilbert and Sullivan wrote songs, the words always came first, with Sullivan creating melodies to fit Gilbert's light verse. When he was asked, "Which came first," Sullivan invariably snapped, "The words—of course." It seemed the only conceivable way to get quality in lyrics. In American songwriting, however, the music came first and, as that music became more rhythmically intricate under the influence of jazz, finding words to fit it became more and more difficult.

Yet at the very moment when Gershwin, Hart, and other budding lyricists were just beginning their careers, an extraordinary series of developments—in musical theater, Hollywood films, and the technology of sound—began to unfold that enabled them to create a body of song that has come to rival the achievement of Gilbert and Sullivan. The first of these developments came in a series of musicals mounted at the tiny Princess Theatre between 1915 and 1917. Unlike bloated European operettas or Ziegfeld's lavish revues, shows like *Leave It to Jane* and *Miss 1917* scaled down casts, orchestras, and sets, placing the emphasis instead upon "smart" dialogue and sophisticated songs. Jerome Kern wrote the music for the Princess Shows and demonstrated to aspiring composers such as George Gershwin and Richard Rodgers that the simple formulas of American popular song could be handled with subtlety and invention. Similarly, his lyricist, the English writer P. G. Wodehouse, showed nascent lyricists that by letting the music come first, they could create artful fits—and sometimes even more artful misfits—that rivaled the best of Gilbert and Sullivan. Far from restricting him, Kern's music enabled Wodehouse to create effects he could not have achieved in light verse. Citing one instance of how Kern's sequence of "twiddly little notes" in "Till the Clouds Roll

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By" inspired him to come up with the subtle rhymes of "What bad *luck! It's* coming down in *buckets,*" Wodehouse said, "I couldn't have thought of that in a million years—why, dash it, it doesn't scan." By letting the music take the lead, Wodehouse also found he could make a lyric sound more colloquial—less like poetry and more like conversation. When Kern threw a musical triplet into the melody for "Bill," Wodehouse used it to puncture romantic effusion with a vernacular shrug: "I love him because he's—*I-don't-know*—because he's just my Bill."

No one embraced the Princess Shows more eagerly than Lorenz Milton Hart, who, friends recalled, "had a habit of sitting in front of an old Victor phonograph and listening" to the songs of Kern and Wodehouse. One such day in 1919, a sixteen-year-old composer, Richard Rodgers, came to Hart's apartment. Once Hart realized Rodgers shared his love for the Princess shows, the partnership was sealed. Hart then flew into a tirade against lyricists who failed to employ "interior rhymes, feminine rhymes, triple rhymes . . . indeed anything but juxtapositions like 'slush' and 'mush.'" "I left Hart's home," Rodgers recalled, "having acquired in one afternoon a career, a partner, a best friend, and a source of permanent irritation."

For years, however, Rodgers and Hart struggled to find success on Broadway, where Hart's clever rhymes and literate wit were dismissed by producers as "too collegiate." Finally, in 1925, the young songwriters were asked to provide songs for a fund-raising revue for the Theatre Guild. Originally slated for only two performances, *Garrick Gaieties* ran for more than two hundred performances and showed that audiences would really listen to—and love—artful lyrics. In the hit of the show, "Manhattan," Hart used Rodgers's musical syncopation to fragment his lyric into cleverly rhyming shards:

> We'll go to Greenwich
> where modern men itch—
> to be free.

For the next edition of *Garrick's Gaieties,* Hart employed Rodgers's rhythmic melody to rhyme even more adroitly:

> Beans could get no *keener re-*
> ception in a *beanery.*
> Bless our mountain greenery home!

Not only were such songs the hits of the show, they went on to become independent hits through sheet-music and record sales, and the lyrics

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were even reprinted in newspapers around the country. By this time, largely due to the creation of ASCAP, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, in 1914, composers and lyricists ("authors") shared 50 percent of the royalties with publishers, as opposed to receiving only a small portion of royalties from sheet-music and record sales.

No one was more surprised at such success than Larry Hart himself. Up until then, he reflected, "the song hit of a show was usually a very simple one with monosyllabic rhymes, and the cleverest lyricists"—here he cited Wodehouse as the prime example—"were seldom big-hit writers." But he was proving himself wrong. "I began to read about Larry in the columns of the New York papers," a friend recalled. "It was a major breakthrough! Then other lyric writers started gaining attention and there was a gush of wonderful words and music." In that gush were Irving Caesar's lyrics for "Tea for Two" and other songs from *No, No, Nanette*, and Ira and George Gershwin's first hit show, *Lady, Be Good!* Modeled on the Princess Theatre shows, *Lady, Be Good!* inaugurated a series of Jazz Age musicals that featured dynamic dances, snappy gags, and an overall rhythmic thrust that the Gershwin brothers captured perfectly in song. Through frequent trips to Harlem nightclubs, George Gershwin had assimilated jazz and blues into what he called his own "stenciled" style of music; bristling with abrupt rests and sudden bursts of staccato notes, his melodies gave a lyricist, as Ira put it, "little room to turn around." When Ira heard his brother play the first number they needed for the show, he was stumped: "George, what kind of a lyric can I write for *that?*" Then, after a pause, he mused, "Still . . . it is a fascinating rhythm." Suddenly, he had his title phrase—always the hardest part of a song to come up with—but it still took days to work out the rest of the lyric. "There was many a hot argument between us," Ira recalled, but when "Fascinating Rhythm" was sung by the stars of the show, Fred and Adele Astaire, it sounded exactly like what Ira said a good lyric should be: "rhymed conversation."

> Fascinating rhythm—you've got me on the go!
> Fascinating rhythm—I'm all a-quiver!
> Fascinating rhythm—the neighbors want to know
> why I'm always shaking just like a flivver.

Variety officially recognized this lyrical renaissance in 1925, noting that "for too many years the general run of musical comedy songs were stupidly worded. Nothing was advanced in the lyrics; they were repetitious. Throughout every few bars came the words 'I love you'

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and usually a sad sweet finale set to the words 'and love like ours will never die.' . . . But in the last two or three seasons, things have taken a change." *Variety* then quoted numerous lyrics by Hart, openly comparing him to Gilbert, and praised Ira Gershwin's "great lyrics . . . great principally because they fitted the music precisely." Once that fusion of words and music had been achieved, American popular songs became enduring works of art where, as Yip Harburg put it, "words make you think thoughts; music makes you feel a feeling, and a song makes you feel a thought."

For the rest of the roaring twenties, Ira Gershwin, Larry Hart, and Oscar Hammerstein led the lyrical way, Hart manufacturing such gems as "Thou Swell," with rhymes as pyrotechnic as "Hear me holler I choose a sweet lollapaloosa in thee" or as shrewdly simple as

> Give me just a plot of—
> not a lot of—
> land
> AND
> thou swell, thou witty, thou grand!

Ira Gershwin took the way Americans added suffixes to words and came up with "Embrace me, my sweet embraceable you." Toying with the way we clip our syllables, he concocted "'S wonderful! 'S marvelous! That you should care for me! 'S awful nice! 'S paradise! 'S what I long to see!" Like Hart, he took his lyrics "from thin air, literally and figuratively, by listening to the way Americans spoke to each other—their slang, their clichés, their catchphrases." Out of the most ordinary expressions—"You Took Advantage of Me," "My Heart Stood Still," "How Long Has This Been Going On?" "I've Got a Crush On You"—Ira Gershwin, Larry Hart, Oscar Hammerstein, and other members of the class of 1895–96 took the American vernacular and made it sing.

Oscar Hammerstein, who had primarily written high-flown operettas until then, turned to a more earthy style for the 1927 production of *Show Boat.* From the stoic resignation of "Ol' Man River":

> "Tote dat barge!" "Lift dat bale!"
> Git a little drunk an' you'll land in jail.

to the equally resigned passion of "Can't Help Lovin' That Man":

> Fish got to swim and birds got to fly,
> I got to love one man till I die

his lyrics unearthed the poetry beneath the idiom of masses. At the

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other end of the social scale, Cole Porter wrote lyrics that played off the argot of the fashionable smart set. Long considered a dilettante too elite for Broadway, Porter finally had his first hit in 1928 with "Let's Do It," one of his patented "list" songs, whose lyric read like a witty catalog:

> Birds do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it . . .
> In Spain the best upper sets do it,
> Lithuanians and Letts do it . . .
> Electric eels, I might add, do it
> though it shocks 'em I know.
> Why ask if shad do it—
> waiter, bring me shad roe.

In "You Do Something to Me," Porter poked fun at such elegant chatter as "Do do that voodoo that you do to me."

Such lyrical experiments were possible in the 1920s, the heyday of the Broadway musical, when, for example, in one week in 1927 alone, twenty new Broadway shows premiered. The stock-market crash of 1929 put an end to all that. Ever resilient, however, the musical theater turned to smaller revues, "smart shows," where frugally staged skits and songs took on a satirical edge. These shows brought new lyricists to the fore and further advanced the renaissance of American songwriting. Yip Harburg, who had gone into business rather than songwriting after college, found himself a victim of the crash. "I had my fill," he observed wryly, "of this dreamy, abstract thing called business and I decided to face reality by writing lyrics." His old school chum Ira Gershwin gave him money and introduced Yip to composers Jay Gorney and Vernon Duke. Gorney and Harburg's 1932 song, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" from the revue *Americana*, quickly became the anthem of the Depression. Taking the Depression seriously, Harburg, who throughout his life commented satirically on social issues, explored human feelings that went beyond the usual romantic sentiments of popular songs:

> Why am I standing in line
> just waiting for bread?

The song became global and showed that audiences and publishers did not only want love songs during the Depression. Even earlier, Ira Gershwin had written an anti-war satire in "Strike Up the Band," and Hammerstein's "Ol' Man River" was a far cry from a romantic lyric. Along with satire, lyricists such as Irving Berlin penned patriotic songs, such as "God Bless America" and lyrics of haunting nostalgia, such as

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"White Christmas." It was not, for the great American lyricists, just "I love you" in thirty-two bars.

Perhaps because they are less tied to their historical era, however, it is the love songs that have proved to be more enduringly popular. Yip Harburg, with Vernon Duke, showed he could also write romantic songs laced with imagery that was pointed and poignant:

> April in Paris, chestnut in blossom,
> holiday tables under the trees,

as well as literate:

> Whom can I run to,
> what have you done to
> my heart?

With composer Harold Arlen, in turn, Harburg also demonstrated that he was just as adept at playfully juggling illusion and reality:

> It's only a paper moon,
> sailing over a cardboard sea
> but it wouldn't be make-believe
> if you believed in me.

In revues at Harlem's Cotton Club, another lyricist of the class of 1896, Andy Razaf teamed with pianist Fats Waller on such winsome songs as "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Ain't Misbehavin'" with its terse, telegraphic expression of loneliness:

> like Jack Horner—in the corner
> don't go nowhere—what do I care?

Still another lyricist born in 1896, Howard Dietz, made his name in little revues. Throughout the 1920s he had styled himself a "literary aficiando," who placed light verse in F.P.A.'s "The Conning Tower" alongside Dorothy Parker and Robert Benchley. When he heard that the producers of *The Little Show of 1929* were looking for a "perverse lyric of suave romantic frustration" that Clifton Webb could deliver "in full-dress suit and spotlight," Dietz collaborated with composer Arthur Schwartz and came up with the urbanely casual:

> I guess I'll have to change my plan,
> I should have realized there'd be another man.
> Why did I buy those blue pajamas
> before the big affair began?

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In other little revues, Dietz proved he too could write such passionately romantic lyrics as "Dancing in the Dark" (1931), "Alone Together" (1932), and "You and the Night and the Music" (1934).

The emergence of sound films at the end of the 1920s was another development that fueled the renaissance in American songwriting. Composers and lyricists found relief from the Broadway Depression by heading west to Hollywood. Once Al Jolson sang Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies" in the 1927 "talkie" *The Jazz Singer*, it became vividly apparent that film could be a new showcase for songs. Close-ups and special lighting made it possible to present a song more intimately than it could ever be performed on stage, and the realistic nature of film placed a premium on informal, colloquial lyrics. That same realism, however, presented studios with a problem: how would audiences accept ordinary characters suddenly bursting into—and out of—song, without even the applause that cushioned the transition from dialogue to song in stage productions?

Their first solution was to make musicals about singers—Broadway hoofers or neighborhood kids putting on a show—so that actors sang on screen because they were playing the roles of singers. With songs done as pure "performances," rather than as the personal expression of a character in a dramatic situation, almost any popular song could be inserted into a film, and lyricists like Buddy DeSylva found a new home in Hollywood, writing everything from Jolson tearjerkers like "Sonny Boy" to the wryly cheerful "Sunny Side Up":

> Stand upon your legs!
> Be like two fried eggs!
> Keep your sunny side up.

Gradually, films experimented with integrating songs into the story of a film so they were presented not as performances but as the lyrical expression of a character's feelings at a particular moment in the story. One of the first films to take full advantage of the cinema's power to integrate sound, story, and visual image was the 1930 production, *Monte Carlo*. As the runaway bride Jeanette MacDonald boards a train, flings open the window, and gazes rapturously at the unfolding landscape before her, she sings a lyric by Leo Robin, whose open, propulsive rhymes correspond to shots of rolling train wheels and capture her growing sense of freedom:

> My life has only be*gun!*
> Beyond the blue ho*rizon*
> *lies* a *ris*ing *sun!*

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Like DeSylva, Leo Robin was also a member of that remarkable class of 1896 who migrated from Broadway, and he spent most of his career in Hollywood. He wrote such casually colloquial lyrics for Bing Crosby as "Love in Bloom," "June in January," and "Love Is Just Around the Corner," but his wittiest film song, "Thanks for the Memory," is forever identified with Bob Hope, who talked rather than sang his way through its urbane catalogue:

> Thanks for the memory
> of rainy afternoons,
> swingy Harlem tunes,
> and motor trips
> and burning lips
> and burning toast and prunes.

Early attempts to integrate lyrics into the fabric of a movie came in the Rouben Mamoulian film *Love Me Tonight* and Lewis Milestone's *Hallelujah, I'm a Bum!*, both of which had songs by Rodgers and Hart. Not only did Hart supply such memorable lyrics as "Isn't It Romantic?" and "Lover," he experimented with rhymed dialogue to ease the transition from speech into song. Then in 1933 Fred Astaire began making movies with Ginger Rogers, providing lyricists with still more opportunities to take the American song to new heights. Astaire and Rogers moved as effortlessly from talking to singing as they did from walking to dancing, and lyricists could write for them in a more thoroughly natural style. When lyricists wrote for the stage, they had to supply long, open vowels so singers could sustain and project phrases to the back of the balcony. In Hollywood, however, where singers sang into a microphone (and frequently lip-synched on screen to their own prerecorded songs), lyricists could revel in the short vowels and clipped consonants that are more native to the English language. Writing for Fred Astaire films, Ira Gershwin could use such thorny phrases as "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "Stiff Upper Lip," and "Nice Work If You Can Get It." In the 1937 film, *Shall We Dance?*, the film lyric truly reached its expressive peak when Astaire turns to Rogers, and barely seeming to sing, utters the perfectly conversational,

> The way you wear your hat,
> the way you sip your tea,
> the mem'ry of all that—
> No, no! They can't take that away from me!

Through a catalogue of witty images—including such unflattering compliments as "The way you sing off-key"—Ira Gershwin's lyric reso-

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nates with the sophisticated ease that was the hallmark of Astaire's style.

As America emerged from the Depression, many songwriters returned to Broadway and collaborated on a series of successful shows, each filled with stellar songs. One show alone, Rodgers and Hart's 1937 *Babes in Arms,* produced "The Lady Is a Tramp," "Where or When," "Johnny One-Note," "My Funny Valentine," and that quintessentially Hart lyric of romantic pain and cynicism, "I Wish I Were in Love Again":

> The furtive sigh, the blackened eye,
> the words "I'll love you till the day I die"—
> the self-deception that believes the lie . . .
> when love congeals, it soon reveals
> the faint aroma of performing seals,
> the double-crossing of a pair of heels . . .

Shortly before Hart's untimely death in 1943, Richard Rodgers teamed with Oscar Hammerstein, whose lyrical style was the complete opposite of Hart's. While Hammerstein lacked Hart's flair for the brilliant rhyme and the subtly twisted sentiment, he was the master at grounding song in character and situation. One of the first lyricists to write both book and lyrics for a musical, Hammerstein, together with director Rouben Mamoulian, in 1943 made "integration" between book and lyrics the watchword on Broadway, providing lyricists with yet another opportunity to deepen the character of American song. When the curtain opened on *Oklahoma!,* it revealed not the usual chorus line of beautiful girls but an isolated farm woman churning butter. As "Oh! What a Beautiful Morning" was heard offstage, it set off a score of songs, from "I'm Just a Girl Who Can't Say No" to "Surrey with the Fringe on Top," that were intimately wedded to character and dramatic moment. What enabled such songs to become popular, even among people who had not seen the Broadway production, was a new creation, the original cast album. *Oklahoma!* was the first musical packaged in a boxed set of records, and its success induced Rodgers and Hammerstein to continue with such integrated, and increasingly dramatic, even tragic, musicals as *Carousel, South Pacific,* and *The King and I.*

In 1944, Yip Harburg, who had written both book and lyrics for the 1938 musical *Hooray for What?* followed the success of *Oklahoma!* with the next great "folk-operetta," *Bloomer Girl* (a feminist and civil rights show typical of Yip), and in 1947 created the most verbally inventive, pointedly satiric, and hilariously anti-racist of all Broadway musicals in *Finian's Rainbow.* Harburg's wordplay flourished in such songs as "Something Sort of Grandish,"

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Thou'rt so adore-ish, toujour l'amourish,
I'm so cherchez le femme . . .
Why should I vanquish, relinquish, resish
when I simply relish this hellish condish?

"When I'm Not Near the Girl I Love (I Love the Girl I'm Near),"

Always I can't refuse 'em,
always my feet pursues 'em,
long as they've got a "boo-som,"
I woos 'em.

and, "The Begat,"

When the begat got to gettin' under par,
they begat the daughters of the D. A. R.
they begat the Babbitts of the bourgeoisie
who begat the misbegotten G. O. P.

Leo Robin, too, moved back from Hollywood to Broadway just long enough to show that he, too, could master the new integrated musical with tough-nosed lyrics for *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* that instantly evoke character and story:

Men grow cold, as girls grow old,
and we all lose our charms in the end,
but square-shape or pear-shape,
these rocks don't lose their shape—
diamonds are a girl's best friend.

Such shows and songs by the lyricists of 1895–96 inspired a whole new generation of theater writers—Frank Loesser, Alan Jay Lerner (a disciple of Larry Hart), Stephen Sondheim (whose mentor was Oscar Hammerstein), and Sheldon Harnick (whose mentor was Yip Harburg).

Meanwhile, back in Hollywood, the same movement toward integration of song with story was taking place at MGM under the eye of producer Arthur Freed, once a lyricist himself and now a force who molded all elements of musical films together into brilliant wholes. Beginning in 1939 with *The Wizard of Oz*, the full integration of story, character, and song came about largely through Yip Harburg's influence. In this now-classic film, nearly half of the running time consists of lyrics and music. Harburg wrote all of the dialogue in these musical sequences and was the final script editor, making sure that song and story were perfectly intertwined. His lyrics defined character and

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moved the action forward, yet glistened with his characteristic wit:

> I would not be just a nuffin',
> my head all full of stuffin',
> my heart all full of pain,
> and perhaps I'd deserve you
> and be even worthy erv you
> if I only had a brain.

Harburg sustained such brilliant wordplay to establish three separate characters—the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, and the Cowardly Lion!

The magnificent MGM musicals continued throughout the 1940s with such gems as *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *Easter Parade*, then into the 1950s with films that recycled older songs and wove them into newer stories: *American in Paris, Singin' in the Rain*, and *The Band Wagon*, for which Howard Dietz wrote a new lyric that captured the very spirit of Hollywood's great age:

> The plot can be hot—simply teeming with sex,
> a gay divorcee who is after her "ex."
> It could be *Oedipus Rex* . . .
> The dame who is known as the flame,
> or the king of an underworld ring—
> he's an ape who won't let her escape.
> That's entertainment!

MGM's example led other studios to mount musicals where songs expressed character and situation, providing still more opportunities for lyricists and composers to ply the art of American song. In one of the last of these great original Hollywood musicals, Warner Brothers' *A Star Is Born*, Ira Gershwin provided the lyric for Judy Garland's last major film:

> The night is bitter,
> the stars have lost their glitter,
> the winds grow colder,
> and suddenly you're older

"The Man That Got Away" was also Ira Gershwin's own swan song as a lyricist, and one of the last great Hollywood film songs.

Beginning in 1954, a new musical style entered American song-writing, and by 1964, although Yip Harburg and other lyricists held out for a few more years, their kind of song had been displaced. Musical films themselves gradually faded away, beset both by the new

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medium of television and the burden of production costs. The Broadway musical has managed to survive, but it is rare for songs from even the most successful shows to become popular the way songs regularly did during the Golden Age. The passing of that era and its American songs is lamentable, but now, a century after the birth of the lyricists who wrote so many of them, it is time for celebration. Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, Yip Harburg, Oscar Hammerstein, and those other lyricists started out as poets, and from our perspective a century later, that's what they have become. The light-verse poets they so admired in their youth—F.P.A., Don Marquis, Robert Benchley—are hardly read today, while the recognized major poets of the twentieth century—Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens—are so difficult and allusive that they are read primarily in the universities. When ordinary people, at some emotional moment in their lives, seek for words, they are more likely to echo the great lyricists. Finding ourselves in love with our own funny valentine, we murmur, with Lorenz Hart, "Your looks are laughable—unphotographable—yet you're my favorite work of art." Faced with the loss of love, we say, pugnaciously, with Ira Gershwin, "They're writing songs of love—but not for me." Confronted with life's daily failures and frustrations, we sigh, with Yip Harburg, "Birds fly over the rainbow—why then, oh why, can't I?"

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Talcott Parsons, My Teacher

RENÉE C. FOX

IT WAS PRIMARILY TO STUDY WITH TALCOTT PARSONS that I chose to do my graduate work in sociology in the Harvard Department of Social Relations. Parsons founded the Department of Social Relations to provide interdisciplinary as well as disciplinary training and collaborative thinking in anthropology, personality and social psychology, and sociology. During my graduate student years (1949–1954), and throughout the twenty-five years that ensued until his death in 1979, Talcott Parsons was my major teacher. Even in death, he continues in that role.

In the May 9, 1979, *New York Times* obituary, Talcott Parsons was described as a "towering [intellectual] figure," who was "responsible for the education of three generations" of social scientists. "When he retired in January 1973," the obituary noted, some 150 of "his past and present students and colleagues converged on Cambridge for a dinner in his honor. The former students ranged in age from 23 to 63 and came from as far as Germany and California." What accounts for the scope, longevity, and depth of Talcott Parsons's influence, however, is not self-evident.

To begin with, he was not a physically impressive person. He was short, with small hands and feet, and a protruding paunch that strained the buttons on the shirts—often striped—that he wore with nondescript ties, tucked into plain trousers, under his limited repertoire of slightly rumpled tweed jackets, the latter usually flecked with cigarette ash. He exchanged these university and teaching garments for work clothes when he did chores around his simple country house in New Hampshire, which was dubbed "The Farm"; and on ceremonial and formal occasions, he wore a dark blue, pin-striped suit which, however immaculately pressed, somehow took on the same bagginess that characterized all his other clothes. At the age of forty-eight when I first met him, he had a fine-featured, cherubically shaped face be-

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neath a bald head. It was hard to imagine him other than bald. His small, gray-brown, almond-shaped eyes were gentle yet piercing, inquisitive yet reticent; his nose was well shaped; and above the upper lip of his broad, thin mouth he had a tidy brush mustache that, like his baldness, seemed an intrinsic part of his person. In an unobtrusive way, he strongly resembled some of his Old American, Congregationalist forebears in the family portraits that he and his wife Helen once showed me. His was a genealogical tree that stretched back to such notable ancestors as Jonathan Edwards, the American Puritan theologian and preacher.

After his retirement from the Harvard faculty, Parsons spent three years as a visiting professor in the Sociology Department at the University of Pennsylvania. When he first appeared on campus, many students and also faculty members expressed surprise at how small, inconspicuous, and ordinary such an intellectual giant looked. They had expected him to be larger, more splendid, and more commanding in appearance. They were especially surprised by his shy and utterly unflamboyant demeanor.

Talcott Parsons was a very modest as well as shy man. By temperament and by conviction, there was nothing theatrical about him. He was not a mesmerizing lecturer, either capable or desirous of captivating a classroom or an auditorium audience with oratory and elegant gestures. If anything, he was averse to posturing and histrionics. The one rebuke (kindly delivered) that I remember ever receiving from him was the admonishment "Don't exaggerate," on an occasion when he felt that I was being excessively dramatic about some incident or idea that I was discussing with him.

Parsons's style of lecturing was ruminative—at times, positively free associational. For those who expected such a brilliant intellectual, grand theorist, and master sociologist to communicate his knowledge and thought with magisterial logic and lucidity, his meandering discourse could be disconcerting, even disappointing. But he was always clear-minded and purposive about what he intended to convey, work out, and accomplish through the lectures he delivered and the seminars and discussions he conducted. He was also well prepared—usually in the form of new, handwritten notes that he composed for every class he taught, on lined yellow legal pads, sitting in his favorite armchair in his study at home in the morning, a lapboard as his desk, classical music frequently playing quietly in the background.

What Parsons brought to class was a complex mixture of wide-ranging learning, in the biological and physical sciences, medicine, economics, anthropology, political science, history, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and religion, along with sociology, and a more private

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relationship to literature, music, and art, interwoven with observations, insights, and questions drawn as frequently from his everyday experiences as from erudite sources. These fresh ideas were triggered by his daily reading of the *Boston Globe* and the *New York Times*; by what he had noticed driving from his house in Belmont, Massachusetts, to Cambridge and Harvard Yard, or on more distant professional and personal travels to other cities and countries; and by his continuing conversations, discussions, correspondence, and what he called his "sessions" with an astoundingly broad and diverse network of students, teaching and research assistants, faculty, scholars, and scientists whom he viewed as collaborators in the advance of sociology. That he considered this work to be a calling was unmistakable—a calling that, however solemn, was somehow devoid of pomposity and profoundly enjoyable. ("Talcott has had a very good life doing what he most wanted to do," his wife affirmed in the letter she wrote informing me of his death.)

Parsons's teaching was leavened by the stories, tales, and anecdotes he told. His pleasure in them was because they were drawn from real life, were commonplace yet odd, infused with human comedy, and, above all, because they vivified a basic theoretical perception or point that he was intent on conveying. What his students affectionately referred to as "Talcott's stories," were intellectual parables of folkloric significance. "Many of us learned Talcott's anecdotes like law students mastering their cases, as embodiments of serious principles," the sociologist Victor Lidz has testified. "Some of . . . us feel that we have not taught our own students theoretical points properly until we have retold the salient anecdotes of Talcott's corpus."

Parsons's passion about sociology and sociological ideas transported him beyond his natural restraint. Often, upon arriving in his university office, or soon after he entered a classroom to teach, he would exuberantly tell students, assistants, or young colleagues about a very productive "brainstorming" experience he had had in his study that morning, and about the conceptual "breakthrough" to which he felt it had led. There was nothing self-vaunting or self-congratulatory about these accounts. What Parsons transmitted instead was his creative excitement about being involved in the progress of sociology through the dynamic development of its theoretical framework. Sometimes, when he felt particularly strong about a sociological idea or link in a chain of thought, his vehement commentary was accompanied by fist-pounding that made his desk, or lectern, or conference table rattle.

Ordinarily, Talcott talked in a quiet, slow-paced way, interrupted by pauses for thought. This pondering mode of speech contributed to an at-once frustrating and humorous incident that took place in 1967, a year that I spent doing research in Zaire. It became a practical neces-

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sity for me to telephone Parsons about arrangements that were being made for me to return to Harvard and teach in the Department of Social Relations for a few years. Because of the state of Zairean telephone communication, I spent several successive days in the central post office of the capital city of Kinshasa before my call went through and I succeeded in reaching him. It was customary then for Zairean long-distance operators to listen in on calls (and sometimes even to interrupt the conversation with comments of their own). The measured way in which Talcott spoke, punctuated by long pauses, gave the operator the impression that he had finished talking before he had; and so the operator decided to terminate our call. It took me days of revisits to the Kinshasa post office to resume my conversation with him.

Talcott did not consider my presence in Zaire to be in the least exotic. He viewed my firsthand research in that Central African society, and in Belgium, the European society that had colonized it, to be integral to the development of the sort of cross-cultural perspective that he regarded as conceptually and empirically essential to nonparochial sociology. He was convinced—and he convinced us, too—that one could not clearly see the contours of one's own society, or recognize its distinctive characteristics, without this kind of transcultural perspective.

Talcott Parsons dedicated his book *The Social System* (1951) to his wife in the following way:

To Helen

WHOSE HEALTHY AND PRACTICAL
EMPIRICISM HAS LONG BEEN AN
INDISPENSABLE BALANCE-WHEEL
FOR AN INCURABLE THEORIST

He was indeed an "incurable theorist," but one who—unlike the "totally abstract thinker" he was caricatured to be by some sociologists—respected and appreciated "empiricism." He brought theory to bear upon empirical research, and empirical research to bear upon theory, through both inductive and deductive reasoning. His entire intellectual life as a sociologist was dedicated to developing a general theory of action. But from the very outset of this lifelong endeavor, as he stated in the preface to his first book, *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), the *chef d'oeuvre* of all his published works, he made it clear that, in his opinion, "to treat the development of a system of theory without reference to the empirical problems in relation to which it has been built up and used . . . would lead to the worst kind of dialectic sterility":

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True scientific theory [he wrote] is not the product of idle "speculation," of spinning out the logical implications of assumptions, but of observation, reasoning and verification, starting with facts and continually returning to the facts. . . . Only by treating theory in this close interrelation with empirical problems and facts is any kind of an adequate understanding either of how the theory came to develop, or of the significance to science, possible.

The firsthand research in which Talcott took part was limited to three projects: a participant observation and interview-based field study of medical practice that he carried out in the 1940s, mainly in the Boston area, and primarily in connection with the Massachusetts General Hospital, especially its surgical service; a 1950s study of social mobility among high school boys, also in the Boston area, in collaboration with the sociologist Samuel A. Stouffer, and the sociologist Florence Kluckhohn, using a combination of survey and field research methods, in which graduate students (myself among them) participated; and in the late 1960s into the 1970s, a national study of the faculty members of American colleges and universities that he conducted with the sociologist Gerald M. Platt, primarily through a sample survey. However, the empirical knowledge and insights on which he drew to create his theory, and that he incorporated into it extended far beyond these research projects. They came from his vast reading across a wide range of fields; his personal experiences, including the training in psychoanalysis he undertook in midlife and the didactic personal analysis that he underwent in connection with it; and, most significantly, from what he learned through his active involvement in the research being independently conducted by the students he was currently teaching, by former students, and by colleagues.

Beginning in the late 1940s, and continuing over a period of more than twenty years, Talcott used research funds to hire graduate assistants to investigate "a wide range of problems concerning American values, social structure, social problems, and patterns of institutional change." This was part of what Victor Lidz has described as "a relatively little known but important aspect of Talcott Parsons's work: [his hope of writing] a major interpretive study of American society." For some thirty years, on a regular basis, Talcott also taught a general course about American society for advanced undergraduate and graduate students in which the research he supported, along with his theoretical analysis and interpretation of it, played an important role.

Parsons not only encouraged and fostered our engagement in research of our own, but he was excited by the opportunity to follow it while it was in progress. More than occasionally, he saw things of theoretical import in it that surprised his students. We were startled, a

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little embarrassed, but very pleased to have him announce that a research-born observation or insight of ours had contributed to the particular conceptual "breakthrough" that had occurred in his study that day or in his car as he was driving to his university office.

One of the most significant classroom experiences I had as a graduate student—perhaps the one that made me feel most like a sociologist at work—was my membership in a sub-group of a seminar on Social Structure directed by Talcott. It was an offshoot of the Parsons/Stouffer/Kluckhohn study of the social class origins and social mobility of high school students, and it was organized around some of the theoretical problems that Talcott was contemplating in connection with what eventually became *The Social System.* In the preface to that book, Talcott referred to the importance of the "many discussions that a succession of able students" had had in its writing, singling out by name, in alphabetical order, the six students in that seminar. It seemed a very great accolade.

The teacher-student relationships that Talcott Parsons established were neither casual nor devoid of hierarchy; but they were, at the same time, respectfully and generously reciprocal. He asked many of us to call him Talcott rather than Professor Parsons. Once he arrived in his office at mid-morning, the door was always open to us to drop in for a visit or discussion (a teacherly example I have tried to follow throughout my own career). And he invited such frank intellectual commentary and criticism from us that he created the possibility for encounters to arise with former students and teaching assistants. About one student for whom he had great admiration and affection he once confided to me: "Nathan sometimes makes me feel that, if I were only a bit smarter, I would understand what he is trying to explain to me!"

Parsons's esteem for and gratitude to his students, former students, and the younger social scientists with whom he worked were expressed not only in lectures, citations, and footnotes, but also in the form of dedications to various of his books. His dedication for *Sociological Theory and Modern Society* (1967), for example, reads:

TO THE MEMORY OF

Kaspar D. Naegele

Perceptive observer, imaginative theorist
beloved friend to the very many

Entry into the large, multi-generational circle of Talcott Parsons's students, however, was not an elitist phenomenon. He was not an

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intellectual gatekeeper who admitted students to his orbit primarily on the basis of their IQs, or their grade-point averages. What he asked of us was a commitment to ideas and the life of the mind, an ardent willingness to participate in and contribute to the development of social science and social thinking, and an incandescent excitement about doing so.

This sense of dedication, and what Talcott termed "effervescence," pervaded an ethnographically detailed letter that he wrote to me on November 12, 1976, during one of the three academic years he spent as a visiting faculty member at the University of Pennsylvania just after his retirement from his Harvard professorship. I was chairman of the Sociology Department at the time and in this capacity had taken the initiative to bring him to the university. But on the day that he composed this letter, I was temporarily on leave of absence, pursuing research in Belgium. "A main point" in writing to me, Talcott Parsons stated, was to "give [me] something of a report" on a "session" he had had at Penn with the sociologists Harold Bershady, Victor Lidz, and Robert Bellah about the "paradigm of the human condition" that he was developing. (Bershady and Lidz were both members of the Penn faculty, and Bellah had flown to Philadelphia from Berkeley to deliver a paper at a meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.)

> The session . . . was an extraordinary success. . . . We [had] several hours together on . . . Sunday, which consisted in sparring around about various aspects of the human condition problem. As I remember, I occupied a fair amount of time going over certain of the insights which had developed for me, particularly from a re-reading of a good deal of Freud, and concentrated on the problem of certain relations between the system of action and the organism, notably the organism of the actor of reference. . . .
>
> When I met Bob for breakfast the next morning, he was obviously in an effervescent state. . . . He had sparked over these things the evening before, after I left him, and the next morning. He even had some new insights in the course of our breakfast conversation, on which he made notes on the restaurant menu. When we assembled in McNeil [Building], then, he simply burst forth. We had conferred in your office, but he said immediately he needed a larger blackboard, which Harold found in an empty seminar room on the first floor. Bob very quickly covered it with diagrams, saying that he would not have predicted that he would get himself involved in "Parsonian formalism" at this junction. They were all fourfold diagrams. He started a paradigm of the primary aspects of religious orientations. . . .
>
> You might like to know the four categories. He used the general term "ultimate" following his own previous usage and that of Tillich, and introduced the categories: A. ultimate agency; G. ultimate fulfillment; I. ultimate order; and L. ultimate ground. Interestingly, in the spelling out for the Christian case, he put God the Father in the A-box, God the Son in the G-box, the Holy Spirit in the I-box, and what he called "being" in the L-box.

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Then he went on to spell it out for Greek religion, for Buddhism, for Judaism, for Confucianism, for Islam, and ended up with Marxism.

You can well imagine that the atmosphere was one of really high intellectual excitement. We all hastily copied what Bob had written on the blackboard, and after a great deal of discussion, including many questions of interpretation of what he meant by such and such, he promised that he would try his hand at some kind of discursive draft in the . . . near future. Fairly obviously, we could not keep up that level for very many hours. We went out to Cohen and Kelly's for lunch, and when we came back, concentrated for the remaining time we had on his paradigm of Marxism in relation to the one that Harold and Victor have put forward. . . .

I have continued to plug on my own concerns, many of which are on the periphery of what we discussed in that meeting. I think when Harold, Victor and I get together next week, we ought to have a very good session.

"It will be no surprise to followers of the theory of action," Parsons wrote in the essay he later published on "A Paradigm of the Human Condition," "that the framework chosen for this effort is the familiar scheme of the four functional categories that we have been using in a variety of ways for twenty years." And indeed, those of us who joined him in exuberant theoretical sessions such as the one described, found ourselves caught up in an ever-expanding conceptual universe, composed of four-fold tables that filled menus, whole pads of lined, yellow paper, and rooms full of blackboards—leading us to places that were sometimes as comical as they were creative—when, for example, we found ourselves fitting God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit into Parsonian boxes.

His intellectual excitement and involvement notwithstanding, Parsons lucidly recognized that his four-fold constructs and imagery, like model-building in all scientific fields, reified his theory and the aspects of reality to which it referred, and symbolically expressed some of the beliefs as well as the cognitive ideas in which it was grounded. He taught us to recognize this, too.

The relationship that Talcott Parsons formed with each of us was not only intellectual, but also profoundly human and in many ways fatherly. Although every one of us had her or his own unique connection to Parsons, there was a sense in which we formed a kind of kinship system, of which he was the paterfamilias. He watched over our professional development, exulted in our achievements, unobtrusively but carefully followed the events that occurred in our personal lives, linked us to one another, and gave many of us the pleasure of coming to know his own family: his wife, Helen, his daughters Anne and Susan, and his son Charles. (In my own case, his eldest daughter, Anne, my contemporary, who brilliantly bridged cultural anthropol-

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ogy and psychiatry in her work, and who died prematurely, on June 9, 1964, at age thirty-three, became a close friend.)

In an era when there were far fewer women than men training to become sociologists or social scientists of any kind, one of the attributes that distinguished me from most of Parsons's graduate students was my being a woman. He was responsive to the fact that I was a woman, but not in a fashion that set me apart or that made me self-conscious in any way. He treated me neither as "one of the boys" nor as a particularly favored or unfavored person. Parsons's natural egalitarianism and his gentlemanliness made me feel that he took me seriously as a sociologist-in-the-making whom he esteemed intellectually and liked personally.

Four memories:

•The first term paper that I wrote for Parsons was in a course on social institutions and their analysis in which I was enrolled as a beginning graduate student. The paper, based on my history as a polio patient when I was seventeen years old, emphasized the structural strains and role conflicts that occurred between the patient, her family, the physical therapist, and the orthopedic surgeon in that situation. I received a straight A for my paper, with only one comment written on it in Talcott Parsons's own hand: "What a terrible experience!"

•My Ph.D. dissertation was based on the three years (1951–1954) that I spent as a participant observer in a Harvard Medical School-affiliated hospital on its metabolic research ward, studying the entwined problems and stresses of the patients and physicians of that ward, their shared ways of coping with their difficulties, and the tragicomic community they created out of their common predicament. For reasons too complex to recount here, the psychiatrist who headed the team under whose aegis I carried out this study, was upset by some of my findings and by the "literary" style in which they were written. After reading the copy of my dissertation that I presented to him, he threatened to take steps to prevent my receiving my doctorate unless I agreed to have the dissertation put on restricted reserve in the Harvard library, so that it would only be available to readers under narrowly defined conditions, and by explicit permission.

When I found myself unable to reason with him about this, I decided to seek Talcott Parsons's counsel and help. His initial response was sympathetic; but he urged me to try to work through the problems in a calm and mature manner. Further discussion, however, convinced Parsons that what he would have called "non-rational" factors were implicitly operating in the situation that made it unlikely that I could

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effectively do this on my own. He quietly agreed to take the matter in hand, and arranged to have lunch with the psychiatrist, whom he knew professionally. Parsons amicably but firmly told the psychiatrist that he had no jurisdiction over my dissertation and informed him that it was considered to be an outstanding piece of work by the Department of Social Relations, which was accepting it in fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph.D. Parsons also made it clear that he would not accede to the psychiatrist's request that library access to it be limited. This luncheon meeting did not rupture the relations between the two men.

•When I stayed overnight in the Parsons's Belmont house—which I periodically did after my graduate school years—without my asking him to do so, Parsons always came into my room, before I went to bed, to open the windows for me, no matter how frigid the weather, so that I would be sure to have what he felt was a sufficient amount of healthy, fresh air to breathe in during the night.

•A letter that I received from him in 1976 ended in the following way:

> I don't think I have ever had occasion to render my very special thanks to you for what you did to make my visiting appointment to Penn possible and to make it a vital and interesting experience. I really could scarcely have hoped for a finer way to anchor my work in the first three years following my formal retirement here at Harvard. It was a banner experience from my point of view, the repercussions of which will be with me as long as I live. You and I had been very good friends long before that, but this certainly sealed the solidarity of our relationship, as probably nothing else could have done. Helen joins me,
>
> With great affection,
>
> Talcott

As these incidents suggest, Talcott Parsons often expressed his emotions in measured, restrained, sometimes awkward, and frequently coded ways. Both his personal shyness and his old American-Protestant-ethic background shaped what in the parlance of his theory he would have called his "affective" or "expressive" style.

Although Talcott was visibly moved to the edge of tears by great performances of music (especially by the Boston Symphony Orchestra to which he and his wife had season tickets), and openly expressed his enjoyment of art (particularly the paintings of the Dutch and Flemish masters), it was through powerful, non-verbal images that he communicated many of his strong feelings. The sociologist Willy De Craemer

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vividly remembers that, when he was a graduate student, Parsons demonstrated pride and pleasure in how well he had performed on his Ph.D. qualifying examinations by taking him into his office and closing the door behind them so that he could privately share with him the reproduction of a Brueghel painting that hung there—a work of art that came from De Craemer's own Flemish-Belgian native culture. The sociologist and publisher Irving Louis Horowitz once told me that it was through the intimate way that Parsons showed him the Russian fur hat that he had purchased in the Soviet Union while attending a Pugwash Conference held there, at the height of the Cold War, that Parsons conveyed to him how momentous he felt it was to participate in this peace-oriented, nuclear-arms-control meeting. And I shall never forget the compressed grief that was contained in what Parsons said on the day of his daughter Anne's funeral, as we stood side by side on the screened porch of his Belmont house, looking out on a painfully exquisite June afternoon, and he softly commented on the extraordinary beauty of the roses that were in full bloom.

Rituals as well as symbols were important to Talcott Parsons. He not only taught us to recognize, analyze, and interpret them, but to better understand and respond to them in our lives. The life that he and his wife made together was organized and enriched by everyday rituals that included what she prepared for breakfast on different mornings of the week; their ceremonial, generously poured libations before dinner (a large glass of bourbon and water for Talcott); the saying of grace at the Thanksgiving table; and the annual making of "apple-wine," in autumn, at "The Farm" (associated one year with a set of memorable ideas generated by Parsons, Stouffer, and Florence Kluckhohn in the midst of these preparations, which forever thereafter were known as the "apple-wine hypotheses").

Parsons's relationship to symbols and rituals was closely linked to his profound connection to the religious dimensions of human existence. He was the son of a Congregational minister, Edward S. Parsons, who was a "home missionary" in Colorado Springs at the time that Talcott was born (which explains why he began his life there, rather than in New England, the region of his forebears). Talcott's father, who was also a professor of English, subsequently became the president of Marietta College, a Protestant denominational college in Ohio. His clerical roots notwithstanding, Talcott Parsons was not a churchgoing man, as he freely admitted; and he was inclined to refer to himself as "a somewhat backsliding Protestant." But he was impressed and fascinated by the ubiquity and import of religion, or its "equivalent," across time and space, societies, cultures, and civilizations. He was highly respectful of men (and women) "of the cloth," as

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he termed them, and of lay persons of all religious denominations, persuasions, and traditions. His commitment to religious pluralism and ecumenicism extended "beyond belief," to encompass "disbelief" and "unbelief" as well. He considered it an especially high honor to take part in such events as the First International Symposium on Belief (held on March 22–27, 1969, at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, under the co-sponsorship of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers, the University of California at Berkeley, and the Agnelli Foundation) and, more locally, to be asked to deliver the St. Thomas Aquinas Lecture at the Jesuit Theological Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts. The two Jesuit sociologists who invited him to give the Aquinas lecture were gratified by his warm acceptance and amazed by the significance he attached to the occasion.

I agree with the sociologist Roland Robertson's statement that "the topic of religion . . . permeates [Parsons's] *oeuvre*"; that it "became increasingly central to his overall action theory"; and that his "concern with religion and related issues was [more] explicit during the last years of his life, . . . culminating in [his] specification of the analytic dimensions of 'the human condition.'"

His abiding interest in religion, and the important role he was convinced it played in modern, contemporary societies, as well as in traditional and historical ones, was not only apparent in his writing and teaching on the sociology of religion. It was also a leitmotif in his treatment of family and kinship, sexuality and gender differences, age and aging, the economy and professions, science and magic, social class and inequality, prejudice and discrimination, fascism and the rise of Nazism in Germany, the American value system, the evolution of societies and the global order, and, perhaps above all, in what he thought, wrote, and taught about health, sickness, and medicine, and about mortality and death.

Personally and intellectually, Parsons was attuned to the meta-significance and the mystery of the human organism and its life cycle, as well as to the "problems of meaning" posed by human good and evil, by the uncertainties and accidents, suffering and tragedy associated with human existence, and by the discrepancies between virtue, effort, and outcome in human striving. His sense of tragedy was complex and deep. "Human history is not a morality play in which the good are rewarded and the evil punished," he declared at the Rome Symposium on the Culture of Unbelief, "but a struggle for salvation, enlightenment, progress, or community in which many, indeed most, of the participants have been and are caught up in tragic conflicts and dilemmas." In the face of tragedy and its inscrutability, Parsons was exceptionally stoical, compassionate, resilient. All of these attitudes are

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voiced in a letter that he wrote to me about the death, in an automobile crash, of the young daughter of one of his former students:

> So far as I gather, it was sheer accident, on the way home from a party, but that doesn't make it more bearable. . . . These things ought not to happen, but sometimes they do, and somehow the rest of us have to go on living. In that spirit, it was fine to get your detailed account of your active and complicated doings in Belgium. . . .

Parsons's affirmation about my "doings" in Belgium was related to his sense of vocation about sociological work. For him, it was an active affirmation: a way to live, to go on living, and to make sense of the unfathomable, that brought solace.

These remembrances of Talcott Parsons, my teacher, would not be complete without reference to the sphere where he and I had our most significant intellectual rapport—in the realm of the sociology of medicine, a field that he helped to establish.

Parsons's family of origin had a strong medical as well as a clerical tradition, and in his youth Parsons had seriously considered becoming a physician. He maintained a lifelong interest in biology, which he appreciated for its own sake and because of its relationship to medicine, and from which he also derived valuable conceptual insights that contributed to the development of his theory of social action. The Harvard physiologists Walter B. Cannon and Lawrence J. Henderson figured prominently among Parsons's esteemed colleagues and personal acquaintances. Their perspectives on the constituent elements, structures, and processes of living organisms, and on their homeostasis, had a major influence on Parsons's theory, especially in its earlier, structural-functional phase. He avidly followed the revolutionary changes that occurred in molecular and cellular biology during his lifetime, beginning with the discovery of the DNA double helix by Watson and Crick in 1953. Thanks to the kindness of Helen Parsons, I have in my possession a copy of the second edition of Watson's textbook *Molecular Biology of the Gene*, purchased by Parsons in 1971, that he meticulously marked and annotated at many places throughout its 602 pages. "Beautiful!" Parsons penciled in the margin of a passage (on page 179) that read:

> . . . the ordering [of amino acids in proteins] cannot be accomplished by recourse to enzymes specific for each amino acid in a protein for the following reason. Such a device would require as many ordering enzymes as there are amino acids in the protein; but since all known enzymes are themselves proteins, still additional ordering enzymes would be necessary to synthesize the enzymes. . . . This is clearly a paradox, unless we assume a fantastically

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interrelated series of syntheses in which a given protein can alternatively have many different enzymatic specificities. . . . All our knowledge, in fact, points toward the opposite conclusion of one protein, one function.

And at the beginning of Watson's chapter "The Concept of Template Surfaces," Parsons jotted down the parallels he saw between what he considered to be the functional requirements of social systems—namely, adaptation (A), goal-attainment (G), integration (I), and latent pattern-maintenance (L)—and the properties that Watson identified as those upon which the ability of a cell to grow and divide depend. Parsons's notation reads:

L - DNA-RNA
I - Enzymes
G - Energy (ATP)
A - Membranes

So closely did Parsons study this text that he even corrected a typographical error on page 27, where the last name of biologist Thomas Hunt Morgan was inadvertently spelled with an *e* instead of an *a*.

These aspects of Parsons's personal and intellectual biography, his training in psychoanalysis, the results of his field study of medical practice in the Boston area, along with the influence that Bronislaw Malinowski's analysis of magic, science, and religion, and Lawrence J. Henderson's formulation of the "physician and patient as a social system" had upon him, all entered into his drafting what became a founding document of the sociology of medicine. This was chapter 10 of his book *The Social System*, entitled, "Social Structure and Dynamic Process: The Case of Modern Medical Practice." "It will perhaps help the reader to appreciate the empirical relevance of the abstract analysis . . . of the principal elements of the social system and their interrelations . . . we have developed," Parsons stated in his introduction to this chapter, if "we attempt to bring together many . . . of the threads of the foregoing discussion in a more extensive analysis of some strategic features of an important sub-system of modern Western society. For this purpose we have chosen modern medical practice. This field has been a subject of long-standing interest on the author's part as a result of which he has a greater command of the empirical material in this field than in most others."

The fact that Parsons was engrossed in writing this chapter during my initial years as a graduate student shaped my destiny as a sociologist. (I am not "exaggerating," Talcott, when I make this statement!) The recentness of my experiences as a polio patient probably heightened my responsiveness to this area of sociological inquiry. I was pro-

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foundly affected by the ideas that Parsons was generating about the importance of health, illness, and medicine to the functioning of a society, their cultural meaning, and their relationship to the human life cycle, suffering, and death; about sickness as a social role; about the emotional evocativeness of the physician's role, because of the existential significance of illness, and the physical and psychic intimacies that medical work involves; and by Parsons's special emphasis on the limitations and uncertainty inherent to medicine no matter what its stage of scientific development; the frustrations and strains these entail for physicians and patients, and the "ritualized optimism"—which he viewed as a form of scientific magic—that physicians and patients develop under these circumstances as a way not only of coping, but of bolstering their confidence.

Talcott furthered my training in things medical by facilitating the course work that I did at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital (now more euphemistically known as the Massachusetts Mental Health Center), and the research I undertook on the psychiatric unit of the Massachusetts General Hospital. He also provided the chance for me to become affiliated with the investigation of the biochemical and psychological effects of "stress on man," organized by the Metabolic and Psychiatric Groups of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in 1951. It was under these auspices that I conducted my Ph.D. dissertation study of the social world created by the physician-researchers and patient-subjects of Ward F-Second, which subsequently became my first published book, *Experiment Perilous.*

With great interest, but without being intrusive, Talcott followed my dissertation research as it unfolded. When it was my turn as a graduate student to make an oral presentation to the Department of Social Relations on this work in progress, he invited several distinguished medical academics to be present, including the professor of psychiatry who had been his analyst.

Not long after this, Talcott was asked to contribute an article to a special number of the *Journal of Social Issues* concerned with the family and kinship. He decided to write "Illness, Therapy, and the Modern Urban American Family." Based on my contributions to his seminar on social structure, and his knowledge of what I was learning from my research on Ward F-Second, he invited me to co-write that article, which I did—in a collaboration that was as coequal, reciprocal, and easygoing as that between a teacher and a student could conceivably be. The article was published in 1952, during my third year in graduate school. It was my first sociological work in print; and it launched my career.

Some forty-four years later, the wellsprings of the teaching, re-

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search, and writing that I do in the sociology of medicine and the themes that run through it are still related and indebted to the insights and concepts that Talcott Parsons conveyed to me, and to the opportunities to learn that he made possible for me when I was a graduate student.

The enduring meaning of the kind of teacher that Talcott Parsons was lies in what he termed the "memorable experience of intellectual effervescence" with which he provided his students. Through the transmission of such a spark from one generation to another, the intellectual and human vitality of a field is insured. "On this note of relative and cautious intellectual optimism, but still definitely optimism, it seems appropriate to bring this long and complicated, but I hope not confused, analysis to a close," Talcott concluded in "A Paradigm of the Human Condition," one of the last essays he published. "The present close, however," he continued, "is also the beginning of a new phase of exploration of these problems." This is the essence of the heritage I received from Talcott Parsons. I hope I have had some modicum of success in passing it on to those whom I have taught.

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Letter from Tibet

JEREMY BERNSTEIN

In the last decade I have made three extensive visits to Tibet. On these visits I both explored new terrain and returned to places like Lhasa where I had been before. This has given me a kind of barometer as to what has happened in the country since I first went there in the spring of 1987. My most recent trip was in September of 1996. Beginning in 1984, and lasting until the fall of 1987, Tibet appeared to be awakening from the nightmare that had begun in the 1960s and only ended with the the death of Mao Tse-tung in 1976. There had been a cultural and genocidal holocaust in Tibet. Of the more than six thousand monasteries in the country, all but a tiny handful had been totally or partially destroyed and looted. Thousands of monks and nuns were jailed—often tortured and executed.

But in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Deng Xaioping ordered a new policy of tolerance. Monasteries were rebuilt, and religious practice began to re-emerge openly. By 1984 tourism in small groups was once again allowed, and by 1986 the border between Nepal and Tibet had been opened sufficiently to allow tourists of all kinds to go by road from Kathmandu to Lhasa—a distance of about six hundred miles. It was, and is, a very rough trip that requires a four-wheel-drive vehicle in order to make it over rocky dirt roads that are frequently cut by landslides. (Last September we counted seven between Kathmandu and Lhasa. Each time we came to one, we had to walk over hazardous terrain to where we were picked up by a waiting truck that took us to the beginning of the next slide. The denouement was a sort of tightrope dance over a bridge that was in the midst of being reconstructed. We saw the rushing water through the gaping holes in the bridge as we gingerly made our way around them.) The trip from Kathmandu to Lhasa takes at least three days. I made that drive for the first time in the spring of 1987.

In the fall of 1987, there were riots in Lhasa. These coincided with the first of October, which the Chinese celebrate as a national day. Following the riots, tensions continued to remain high, and in 1989 the Chinese declared martial law and closed the country to visitors. Two years later they felt that they had the situation under good enough control to open it again, and by the fall of 1994, the time of my second visit, they were sufficiently confident to open up a second border crossing with Nepal in the extreme western part of the country.

This was not a motorable road but a walking route that had been used traditionally by traders and those pilgrims who crossed into Tibet to visit Mount Kailas, perhaps the most sacred mountain in the entire Eastern religious canon. On this trip, we flew into Lhasa from Kathmandu and then drove more than thirteen hundred miles westward across the Tibetan plateau to the base of Kailas. We then made the traditional circuit of the mountain, finally trekking south across the Nepalese border.

My most recent visit was a reprise of the first. But this time, in addition, we traveled a hundred miles southeast of Lhasa to the city of Tsedang in the Yarlung Valley. Tsedang, whose population is now mostly Chinese, is near the Samye monastery, thought to be the oldest in Tibet, dating back twelve hundred years. It is also about 700 feet lower than Lhasa, which is at 11,830 feet. The somewhat lower altitude is one of the reasons so many Chinese have settled there. The Tibetan presence, in fact, is rapidly disappearing.

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I do not speak Tibetan with any fluency, but if I did, I would be reluctant at the present time to make this too obvious. Tourists have gotten themselves into serious trouble with the Chinese by appearing to speak the language too well and fraternizing too intimately with Tibetans. Yet one does not need to be a Tibetan speaker to realize that something drastic is now happening in the country. A barometer can be found in the presence, or absence, of photographs of the Dalai Lama.

As is well known, the Dalai Lama was forced to flee Tibet in 1959 and has found refuge in Dharamsala in northern India. The fact that the Dalai Lama has not been in Tibet for nearly thirty years means that young Tibetans have no personal recollections of him. But, if anything, his absence has magnified his presence in the consciousness of Tibetans of every age. Dalai Lama photographs have, for them, an almost mystical religious significance. Before our visit in 1987, we were informed of this in Kathmandu and were advised to bring a number of Dalai Lama pictures with us to give away. One could buy them cheaply in the city, and among the five of us in our group, we had several hundred. It was not clear whether, from the point of view of the Chinese, bringing them in was exactly legal, but the general impression was that, if they were not flaunted and were quietly given away, no one would ask too many questions. This is what we did, and no one bothered us.

By 1994 pictures of the Dalai Lama were still in demand and could be found publicly displayed in all the monasteries. I was astounded to find a booth in the Barkhor (literally "eight corners"), the open-air market in Lhasa that winds around the Jokhang—the most sacred temple in Tibet—that displayed Dalai Lama pictures for sale. I was not astounded to read, a few weeks after we left Tibet, that these sales had been stopped by the Chinese. But this September we saw another drastic change. Bringing in and distributing Dalai Lama pictures is now absolutely forbidden. At one of the military checkpoints on the road from Kathmandu to Lhasa, our baggage was searched. Postcards were scrutinized to make sure that no Dalai Lama pictures were on them. Moreover, Dalai Lama pictures have now been forcibly removed from the monasteries—at least those that tourists usually visit. We visited the Jokhang, the Sera, and the Drepung monasteries in Lhasa and the Sakya, Tashilhunpo, Kumbum, and Samye monasteries outside it. There are no Dalai Lama pictures at all. In the Potala Palace, from which the Dalai Lamas ruled and in which many are entombed, the Chinese have gone so far as to cover up with a cloth a picture of the Dalai Lama preaching in India. They forgot to cover up—or didn't understand—the English language caption underneath it. We did find one or two very obscure small monasteries where there were still pictures. Probably the Chinese have not yet gotten around to removing them.

All of this has occurred since the spring of 1996, and it is pretty clear to people familiar with Tibet why. To understand it we have to review a bit of the history of the institution of the Dalai Lamas. In the thirteenth century the Mongol ruler Godan Kahn led an invasion of Tibet. He took several towns and villages, which he looted, and came within a few miles of Lhasa. But then Godan had a sudden religious conversion. He decided that the most learned lama in Tibet was the Sakya Pandita-Kunga Gyaltsen—the abbot of the Sakya monastery, which is just off the route to Lhasa from Kathmandu and about halfway between them. He more or less ordered the Pandita to give him religious instruction, and thus began an arrangement by which the Mongols guaranteed the integrity of the Tibetan state in return for religious guidance—the Patron-Priest relationship century.

In the late sixteenth century, this was formalized when Altan Kahn created the institution of the Dalai Lamas. *Dalai* or *tale* is Mongolian for *ocean*—the idea being that the first Dalai Lama (Sonam Gyatso) had wisdom that was as wide as an ocean. (*Tso* means *lake* in Tibetan and *gya* means *broad,* so *Gyatso,* which is the surname of all the Dalai Lamas, also conveys the idea of *ocean.*) Actually Sonam was the third Dalai Lama; his two predecessors—of which he was the reincarnate—were named simultaneously. The Mongol influence extends even to the name of the country, at least as it is known by foreigners. *Tibet,* or *Tobet,* is a Mongolian name. The Tibetans call their country Po, pronounced "peu."

The first Dalai Lama, Gedun Truppa, had built, starting in 1447, the Tashilhunpo monastery, which was really a monastic town, spacious enough for several thousand monks, in Shigatse, the second largest city in Tibet. It is

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also on the route between Kathmandu and Lhasa. But it was not until 1642 that the fifth Dalai Lama, Lozang Gyatso—or the Great Fifth, as he is known—was designated by Gushri Kahn as both the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet, thus beginning the reign of the Tibetan "God Kings." Lozang designated Lhasa—meaning "holy place"—as the capital of Tibet and began the construction of his Potala Palace. But he had an especially beloved teacher named Lobzang Chokyi Gyaltsen, whom he appointed as the abbot of the Tashilhunpo. He proclaimed that this lama was to undergo reincarnation as the so-called Panchen Lama. The Great Fifth had the idea that the Panchen would occupy himself with things of the spirit, while the Dalai Lama had both spiritual and temporal concerns to contend with. But with the death of the Great Fifth, the Panchen Lama became another power center vying for authority with the Regent who ruled until newly reincarnated Dalai Lamas reached maturity. In fact this rarely happened. From the death of the seventh Dalai Lama in 1757 to the birth of the thirteenth in 1876, it is estimated that the Dalai Lamas ruled the country for only seven years. They died mysteriously before they became old enough to rule.

From the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Chinese, who always had territorial ambitions in Tibet, promoted the Panchen Lama as a rival to the Dalai Lama. This is what happened with the tenth Panchen Lama, who was born in 1938, making him three years younger than the present fourteenth Dalai Lama: Tenzin Gyatso. When the Chinese invaded the country in 1950, the Panchen declared that this was a "wonderful" thing for Tibet. When asked to denounce the Dalai Lama, he refused and was brought to trial and beaten until he was once again able to see the merits of the invasion. In 1987, when we visited the Tashilhunpo, the Panchen was living in China. It was said that he had married. But in January of 1989, the Panchen, who appeared to be in excellent health, came to Shigatse and suddenly died of a "heart attack." It seems to have been contagious since his parents also died the same way a few weeks later. Tibetans I spoke with are persuaded that the Panchen was killed by the Chinese; probably, they feel, poisoned.

In May of 1995 the Dalai Lama, who under the traditional system had the ultimate authority in such matters, announced that a new reincarnate of the Panchen had been discovered in a remote district of Tibet. But by November the Chinese announced that the boy, Choekyi Nima, was unacceptable to them, presumably because he had been chosen by the Dalai Lama. He promptly disappeared along with his parents. They then produced three boys, and under duress seventy-five senior monks were summoned to Beijing to choose among them by drawing names from a golden urn. The selected boy, Gyaincain Norbu, was installed as the new Panchen in a ceremony at the Tashilhunpo in the late fall of 1995. But this was not enough for the Chinese. They appear to have made the decision to use this circumstance to eliminate the presence of any manifestation of the Dalai Lama in Tibet. To this end they forcibly removed his picture from all the monasteries, replacing it with the Panchen and their chosen reincarnate whose pictures are now everywhere. When the monks in the Ganden monastery in Lhasa resisted, they were subdued by force. The monastery is now closed to visitors. Monks are now, as they were some years ago, subject to constant political education by Chinese brainwashing. The Potala is now in effect closed to Tibetans, since they are charged the same amount as foreign tourists—a sum that almost no Tibetan can afford. What I sensed among the Tibetans on this trip was not exactly anger. I think what has happened goes beyond anger. It has simply broken people's hearts.

When one sees this sort of thing, or even when one reads about it, one's first instinct is to look for something to do to make it better—anything. I wish that I could produce a simple formula, but I cannot. Perhaps it would be useful if I try to explain what cannot be done.

In Kathmandu, Greenwich Village, and Aspen, Colorado, places I frequent, there are T-shirts and bumper stickers that read "Free Tibet." It has often occurred to me to ask people who exhibit such slogans exactly what they mean by them. There are, I think, three things one might mean. First, one might mean that some external power, or powers, should free Tibet by force in much the same way as the Allies freed Kuwait. Anyone who maintains this cannot have any understanding of the situation on the ground in Tibet. The Chinese

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have not stated how many soldiers and other occupation forces they have in the country, but I have seen estimates of up to a million men—or one soldier for every two Tibetans. This would not surprise me. There are soldiers everywhere in Tibet. There are military airfields and radar stations in the most remote areas, and the southern border with India resembles an armed camp. Liberating Tibet by force would require a nuclear war with China. Can any sane person imagine such an eventuality?

Second, one might mean that the Chinese should voluntarily liberate Tibet or at least restore it to something like the status quo ante: a true "autonomous region" rather than the present sham. But anyone who thinks that this might happen has no understanding of the Chinese attitude toward Tibet. As far as the Chinese are concerned, they *have* liberated Tibet. They believe that they have transformed what they regard as a medieval, unenlightened society into a modern Chinese province. If a few Dalai Lama pictures get seized along the way, so be it. There is, as far as I can see, no constituency in China—either on the mainland or in Taiwan—for an independent Tibet. Even the dissidents in China have been, by and large, silent about this. Recently when two of them, Wang Xizhe and Li Xiabo, suggested that their government consider self-determination for Tibet and a dialogue with the Dalai Lama, this was considered so unusual that it made the headlines in the newspapers in Kathmandu.

Finally, "Free Tibet" might mean that the Tibetans should free themselves by some sort of internal rebellion. There are factions around the Dalai Lama and elsewhere who advocate resorting to guerrilla activity and the like in an attempt to free Tibet. To ask Tibetans to do this is, in my view, to ask them to commit suicide. The Chinese have already killed tens of thousands of Tibetans and will kill tens of thousands more should the need arise. Of course, individuals and groups who become sufficiently desperate *do* commit suicide. That is what the monks do when they resist Chinese soldiers with their bare hands. But this will not free Tibet. It will simply kill more Tibetans. Hence, there is no sensible meaning that I can attach to the slogan "Free Tibet" if *free* is intended as a verb. What then is left?

I don't think, for example, that any sort of trade embargo has much chance of having a serious effect on the situation. On this last visit to Lhasa, I was struck by how many foreign companies seem to have offices there. I noticed Mobil and Peugeot, and I noticed that every other car seemed to be a Toyota. Does anyone really think that these companies will give up lucrative business with China because there are now pictures of the Panchen Lama in the Potala? I am somewhat encouraged by the fact that the Walt Disney Company refused to allow the Chinese to bully them into not releasing a film about the Dalai Lama. But this film was made outside Tibet by an American company. The Chinese attempt at censorship was crude to the point of absurdity. What about a tourist embargo, with tourists refusing to go to Tibet as long as the country is being ruled as cruelly as it is? I have great sympathy for people who argue that visiting Tibet is immoral because it simply puts foreign exchange in the hands of the Chinese with no benefit to the Tibetans. But, sympathy aside, I think that people who argue this way are simply wrong.

In the first place, tourism does not "simply" put money in the hands of the Chinese. Take the matter of tour guides and drivers. When I first went to Tibet in 1987, I was warned that we would have Chinese guides and drivers and that these could be "troublesome." They were more than troublesome. They were awful. They knew no Tibetan, despised the country, and attempted to impose themselves on one's travel plans. For example, by not providing a promised truck, they fixed it so that *we* could not camp, since *they* did not like camping. There were so many complaints about these people that the Chinese finally decided that, if there was going to be tourism in Tibet, Tibetan guides and drivers were essential. In 1994 we had both; and in 1996, I was told that, unless a group makes a specific request, guides and drivers are now always Tibetan.

Tourists bring fresh air in and let light out. Tibetans want you to visit, and many will tell you so. It is, despite everything, still a fascinating and beautiful country. But if you go to Tibet, in my view, a certain humility is in order. In 1987 a number of well-meaning tourists, reacting to the Chinese occupation, were sympathetically encouraging Tibetans to revolt. But when the bullets began to fly, they were safely back home. Go, observe, report back—journalists can't work in the country—but remember it is the Tibetans who will bear

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the consequences of any indiscrete acts on your part.

This is for the short run. For the long run, my only hope—and this seems to be the position of the Dalai Lama as far as I understand it—is that the Chinese will come to their senses. Buddhism, which began in the fifth century B.C. in northern India, migrated centuries later to China before it established itself in Tibet centuries after that. During the last half century, Tibet has been a repository for a religious tradition that had been destroyed in China. But the Chinese are now in a state of turmoil. They do not quite know who they are. Communism as a religion has failed, and capitalism without religion is proving hollow. It is not impossible that they will turn once again toward their roots in the Eastern religions. The Tibetan holy places will become just that and not museums to attract tourists.

On my last visit to Tibet we went to the Sera monastery near Lhasa. This was one of the great monastic communities in the country with more than five thousand monks. Now there are less than a tenth that number, although we did watch a class of very young novices receiving their first doctrinal instruction. We also stood in a line in one of the chapels waiting, with the others, to receive a short blessing from one of the monks. Behind me I noticed a Chinese soldier in uniform. He, too, was waiting to be blessed.

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Poems

JOHN DICKSON

The Novelist

I have the urge to write a Russian novel—
live it, breathe it, slowly becoming Russian
until I'm finished being young Mikhail
or beautiful Natasha so in love with him,
finished being a hundred thousand others
from serf to prince, chambermaid to queen.

This Natasha, she so tender in her years,
sitting at her mirror while Maryushka and Svetlana
dab her cheeks with powder and arrange her hair
for the Grand Ball in the palace.
I make her and young Mikhail radiant dancers
whirling, gliding, half in heaven, half in dream
as they float across the floor so unaware,
like everyone, that within a week her young Mikhail,
his eyes glazed over, would be lying on a battlefield
gazing sightless at the clouds.
All the dancers, Count Baronski, the seated chaperones
and even me completely shaken by the news.

Ah, Natasha—how she wept, so overcome with grief.
And the horror of seeing decades stretch before her
sprinkled with unsavory men with thick, caressless hands—
Vladimir Basilikov and Boris Kalgorin. Eyes of passion.
Brows of hate. Men who made her fingers flutter up
helplessly to protect her throat.
Natasha, so completely Russian—as the Volga,

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as the mountains, as the very soil she stood on
but so devastated by this shattering bereavement.

If only I could somehow brighten up her future,
but how could I intrude and change her destiny?
A writer must be faithful to his craft,
trust the scribbled words the karandash reveals.
But soon I grow so numbed by tragedy no tears are left,
no longer have the appropriate response
for Natasha's dismal circumstances.
Even become allergic to her frequent tears.

So finally, spurning my writer's Hippocratic oath
to follow where the pencil leads, I tear up chapters
four through nine and return to the Grand Ball
to watch Natasha and Mikhail dance—
together once again, enchanted by each other.
I decide to have him be a government food inspector,
then ramble on through chapter after chapter
guarding their Cyrillic lives, watching their children grow
and making sure they always stay in love.

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Mr. Travis

When he leaves his office—
desk meticulous, drawers locked tight,
he walks down the aisle of clerical workers
aware of his power but avoiding their eyes.
If Alice looks up he will nod severely.
If they both go down in the same elevator
he will touch his hat
and step to one side to let her pass,
then move off through the evening crowd
lost in another dimension.

But later, after night drifts in
with its frail silence and cast-iron dark
he will lift the lids of the weary houses
and find her under layers of sleep,
her dark hair sprawled across the pillow
like a pool of dreams that seeps from her head.
A crouching animal awed by fire,
he watches in wonder her woman sleep,
flogging the quiet with his breathing
as he travels her uncharted, moon-clocked land.
Until fingers of fear brush against his face—
carousal voices in the alley
or the whispering feet of furtive cats,
and he'll move away ever so softly
through the night-drenched streets,
still feeding on the look of her.

In the morning he arrives,
strictly business, sometimes urgent,
walks the long aisle he's been programmed to walk
seldom nodding as he passes Alice,
always hiding her memory in his eyes.

✪ JOHN DICKSON is the author of two collections of poetry, *Victoria Hotel* and *Waving at Trains.* His work has appeared in numerous magazines.

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MUSIC

Schubert at 200

JOSEPH HOROWITZ

Franz Schubert, born two hundred years ago, is an icon without a face. In the pantheon of Great Composers, his is the least stable, least identifiable countenance.

During the Mozart Bicentennial much was made of the elusiveness of Mozart the man. Portraying Schubert is more problematic. Mozart was a copious and much-traveled correspondent; his letters document an eventful public life as well as an acute observational eye. Schubert left few letters. His orbit was both tiny and private. He barely traveled or performed in concert. To an inordinate degree, the man must be gleaned from the music.

In his brief lifetime, Schubert was a locally renowned composer of *Lieder* and other domestic fare: dances, piano duets, male part songs. This is why Franz Grillparzer, in a famous epitaph, could write: "The art of music here entombed a rich treasure, but even far fairer hopes." In fact, by the time Schubert died in 1828 at the age of thirty-one, he had far surpassed the thirty-one-year-old Beethoven. But Schubert's mature sonatas, symphonies, and quartets, mainly unpublished and unperformed, were presumably unknown to Grillparzer.

Even Schubert's closest friends were incompletely aware of his artistic stature. They characterized him as an endearing innocent, "modest," "open," "frank," "simple, confiding and honest," "incapable of treachery."

One central Schubert encomium was left by Johann Michael Vogl, the most eminent contemporary exponent of Schubert's songs. "I learned from Schubert," Vogl wrote in 1831, "that there are two kinds of composition, one of which, as in Schubert's case, comes into existence during a state of clairvoyance or somnambulism, without any conscious action on the part of the composer, but inevitably, by an act of providence and inspiration." A famous yet apocryphal anecdote told by Josef von Spaun—that Schubert composed "Erlkönig" in "no time at all . . . just as quickly as one can write"—reinforced this vision of the "natural artist" who is intuitive, not learned or cerebral; gifted in *Lieder*, yet unable to master larger, more intellectually demanding forms.

In the decades following Schubert's death, scholarly assessments perpetuated an admiring and patronizing Schubert portrait. Gottfried Wilhelm Fink's entry in Brockhaus's *Conversation-Lexicon der neuesten Zeit und Literatur* (1834) underestimates Schubert's musical education in tandem with summarizing that he "attempted halfheartedly to write symphonies," and that, in spite of "their oddities," some of his quartets "are full of good ideas." Schubert's piano pieces, Fink continues, "are not known to us." Schubert himself "possessed a shy, reserved character and a humble personality."

By the 1860s, Schubert was an acknowledged "great composer." In 1888, his body was disinterred and laid beside Beethoven's. But—notwithstanding the enlightened counsel of Schumann, who wrote "he who is not yet acquainted with the [*Great* C major Symphony] knows very little about Schubert"—the enduring Schubert portrait remained that of *Liederfürst*: prince of song.

After 1900, the portrait sweetly decayed:

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prince of kitsch. His natural genius, vulnerable persona, early death, and unfulfilled promise consolidated an adorable tragic figurine. The central catalyst was an immensely popular novel: *Schwammerl* (1912) by Rudolf Hans Bartsch. It became the source of an equally popular operetta: *Das Dreimäderlhaus* (*The House of the Three Maidens,* 1916). The plot is a Biedermeier fantasy both bland and insidious. The poet Franz von Schober, the painter Moritz von Schwind, and the singer Vogl, carefree bohemians, encircle the penniless, obscure, and painfully shy composer. Franz jots down his spur-of-the moment *Lieder* on tablecloths. His gentleness and goodwill, even his threadbare clothes, generate an aura of charm. He falls in love with Hannerl, who falls in love with Schober, who agrees to marry her. Schubert finds comfort in his music—or rather in the music of Heinrich Berté: a Schubert confection whose airs and ensembles employ a cunning selection of Schubert tunes. Chef Berté does not merely serve up these melodies. He coats them with sugar, gluing together a sonata chunk with a morsel of *Moment musicaux.* Schubert emerges as an operetta composer of genius, Franz Lehár's truest progenitor.

Das Dreimäderlhaus played in London as *Lilac Time,* in Paris as *Chanson d'Amour,* in Italy as *La casa delle tre ragazze,* in New York—with a revised score by Sigmund Romberg—as *Blossom Time.* Four film versions were produced, including one with Richard Tauber. By the centenary of Schubert's death in 1928, more than one hundred novels with Schubert as the central figure had been written In *Schubert, the Man,* published in English in 1928 with the blessing of America's Schubert Centennial Committee, the popular Viennese music authority Oscar Bie had this to say:

> That face! . . . It is the face of a teacher, but not of a strict one. The hair curls about the brow. No, this is no pedagogue; this is an artist, a true musician, certainly, if not a virtuoso. The gaze is modest; it betokens a man of the people, one who can work and play man to man, one who can casually create beautiful things. The mouth is slightly sensual, with a look of friendly expectancy, a hint of gaiety. The lips smile; they seem ready to tell stories, new and endless stories or the old stories with new variations, never tiring in their Viennese *Gemütlichkeit.* There is nothing commanding, scheming, nothing pressing, nothing problematical. All flows naturally from heart to heart. . . . There are no convulsions, no sudden descent or soaring between dramatic contrasts.

Bie also wrote: "Piano-music, song, and the small orchestra are his province. . . . His art is intimate."

And yet Bie's book reveals enthusiasm for the *Great* C major Symphony and the big piano sonatas. How does he read them? In the symphony's colossal perpetual-motion finale, Bie discerns a "carnival," the melodies "lifted up like snapping flags." Skimming the athematic, atonal central calamity of the *Andantino* of the A major Piano Sonata (D. 959), he writes off the nineteenth century's most violent pages of keyboard music, in which Artur Schnabel found "a wholly new kind of expression" and Alfred Brendel discovers a "feverish paroxysm . . . leaving conventional construction so far behind that it needed Schoenberg to surpass its degree of anarchy." Bie's Schubert is instead revealed in the ensuing rondo, "so full of singing strength that we see, rising from the keys, joyous brotherhoods which, in continual variations, continually recall their vows." As in *Dreimäderlhaus,* the marriage of man and music, mutually misconstrued, is complete.

Over time, this vicious circle was bound to break. For one thing, as the nineteenth century receded, the sentimental Schubert clichés lost their appeal. For another, performers such as Schnabel, who championed the neglected songs and sonatas, discovered many new Schubert faces. "So far as new works were concerned," the musicologist Carl Engel quipped in 1928, "Schubert did not die in 1828 at the age of 31, but lived to be well over 80."

The old Schubert canon had been dominated by melodious or picturesque songs (remember the "Ave Maria"?). The popular piano pieces included the uncharacteristically virtuosic *Wanderer Fantasy,* and the "Little" A major Sonata (D. 664), with its medley of catchy tunes. Schubert's sunny chamber music signatures were the *Trout* Quintet and B-flat Piano Trio. Although Schubert today remains the least discovered Great Composer, a new, weightier Schubert canon has emerged: *Winterreise,* the C major String Quintet, the C major Symphony, the B-flat Piano Sonata (in-

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cluding the long first-movement repeat, ignited by an explosive first ending that pianists once ignored). The temperamental and stylistic extremism of "Der Doppelgänger," of the D. 959 Sonata, of the G major String Quartet, increasingly seem central to Schubert's musical personality. Commensurately, inevitably, Schubert the man is being reportrayed as willful and erratic, a marginalized homosexual, even a possible pederast.

One new Schubert motif is morbidity. Once flagged, it becomes apparent from an early age. "Hagars Klage" (1811)—the earliest surviving Schubert song, composed when he was fourteen years old—is a mother's lament for her dying son. "Leichenfantasie" (1811) is a funeral description embroidered with images of coffin and grave, ghosts and moonbeams. "Der Vatermörder" (1811) is a tale of parricide and remorse. After Schubert contracted syphilis in 1822 or 1823, his intimacy with death ripened. His signature works include the fatalistic *Winterreise.* The Heine settings of *Schwanengesang* exude a macabre solitude.

Schubert's trademark vacillation between major and minor impregnates even his instrumental music with a chronic poignance or resignation. The pianist Claudio Arrau was not alone in finding in Schubert a distinctive *Todesnähe.* Arrau remarks, for instance, of the descending chromatic scales of the C minor Sonata's first movement development: "The way to perform these sections is as something skeletal—without any flesh. Really the work of death." In the first movement repeat of the B-flat Sonata, Arrau finds "a seductive beckoning of death, as in 'Der Lindenbaum.'"

The sources of Schubert's death obsession are both obvious and unfathomable. The Schubert family, like so many of its time, was victimized by infant mortality: of the children born to his mother, seven died before Franz was born, and two more died in infancy following his own birth. Schubert's mother died in 1812 when he was 15. His syphilis marked him as a doomed man. In an 1824 letter he wrote: "I feel myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who, in sheer despair over this, ever makes things worse and worse, instead of better."

The context of the Imperial hothouse of Schubert's Vienna is not irrelevant. Schubert's circle of artists and aesthetes both embodied and—through Schubert—challenged the stifling influence of Biedermeier culture. Metternich's repressive police sealed the interiority of Schubert's artistic vision. (His inability to find acceptable librettos for operas—a less private medium than the *Lied*—was one tangible outcome of contemporary censorship.) From another perspective: with its squalid demimonde and unhealthy climate, Schubert's Vienna was a city where death was a familiar and knowing accomplice.

German Romantic literature and painting supplied pertinent images. Such Goethe creations as Werther, Tasso, the Harper (in *Wilhelm Meister*), even Faust help to situate Schubert's existential journeys. But a song such as "Der Doppelgänger" projects a truly Dostoyevskian derangement. To what extent Schubert the "poet" and "philosopher" is of his time, to what extent a prescient proto-modernist, is typically elusive. We cannot even classify him as Classical or Romantic.

These ambiguities promote ambiguities of interpretation. Playing Beethoven, one must "be Beethoven"—must acquire something like his willfullness. Schubert is more lenient, and yet intense. Relaxation of the will, the player discovers, does not require relaxation of feeling. It follows that different performances of a Schubert sonata may sound completely different. Such Schubert works as the epic-demonic A minor Sonata, D. 845, will never acquire a "mainstream" reading. They mold themselves to the interpreter, not vice versa.

In the late *Drei Klavierstücke,* Schubert's mutability is laid bare. These post-impromptus oscillate between the concert hall and the beer garden. And this polarization of style accompanies a polarization of mood. They lack "unity." Alfred Einstein, in his influential Schubert study of 1951, offhandedly dismissed them with such words as "monotonous," "empty," and "noisy." Today, the *Klavierstücke* are as likely to fascinate as annoy. The swiftness of juxtaposition is cosmic. A manic energy alternates with the spectral and immobile.

The breathless propulsion of the first *Klavierstück,* in E-flat minor, makes the *Moments musicaux* and impromptus seem tame. In maximum contrast, its central *Andante,* in remote B major, is spacious and resigned—and yet mimics, with its tremolos and feathery scales, a tavern zither. This passage evaporates

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in a series of hypnotic, *ppp* chordal triplets: a ghost image of the churning left hand figuration of the main *Allegro assai.* It took Mahler, sixty years later, to achieve a comparably intense eclecticism.

Equally farsighted are the six inimitable Heine settings of *Schwanengesang,* also composed in Schubert's final year. Taking up where *Winterreise* left off, with "Der Leiermann," Schubert composes epigrammatically, not sorrowfully but bitterly. In "Die Stadt," the accompaniment reiterates an arpeggiated diminished seventh chord over a trembling, shivering pedal point—the lapping waves and dank breeze accompanying the poet's boat. So vague and futile is this journey that its endpoint is no ending: a lonely C in the bass, clouded by the chromatic residue. No previous music is so bereft of destination. Liszt's *La lugubre gondola* of 1882 or Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* of 1912 are possible points of reference.

The disillusionment of the Heine songs, whose metaphoric equivalent is the image that dissolves or falsely materializes, peaks in "Der Doppelgänger." Here, as in "Die Stadt," the stripped vocal line is a kind of heightened speech, so tightly is it bound to the rhythm, accentuation, and pitch of the spoken word. This integration of song with German speech preoccupied Schubert from first to last. The early Schiller settings "Leichenfantasie" and "Der Taucher" (1814) are narrative mega-songs, merging arioso and recitative, and documenting Schubert's lifelong susceptibility to the lurid and macabre. They fulminate with operatic violence. The piano parts are orchestrally conceived. Schubert's gift for instrumental and harmonic color produces vivid stage pictures. In "Der Taucher," his account of underwater agitation and grotesquerie foreshadows *Das Rheingold.* No one familiar with the *Ring* will fail to think of Siegfried's confrontation with Wotan upon encountering "Lodas Gespenst" (1816). An acknowleged masterpiece of lyric declamation is *Prometheus* (1819), in which Schubert feeds on the magnificence of Goethe's language. The *Lied* here unequivocably attains the dramatic force of opera.

In this impressive evolution of musical speech, the interiority and economy of "Die Stadt" and "Der Doppelgänger" are new, and so is the use of music to evoke half-real, half-imagined metaphor: the shrouded spires, the dreary sea, the moonlit double. This, too, is Wagnerian: it is Schubert forecasting the subjective landscape of *Tristan und Isolde.* Schubert's own stage works, with their hackneyed librettos, attempt nothing remotely comparable. But his unfinished cantata *Lazarus* (1820) is doubly pertinent: for its sustained narrative style, and for its story, a meditation on death, which mainly dispenses with external action. Consider *Lazarus* and *Winterreise,* "Die Stadt" and "Doppelgänger," and you can almost glimpse the revolutionary stage works Schubert's early death aborted.

Nothing could more refute the imagery of innocent tunesmith that once shaped Schubert's reputation. Even his earliest songs reveal less a melodist than an experimental dramatist. More than he knew, Grillparzer was right: at journey's end, the Heine songs represent Schubert at the very height of his powers—but not of his potential.

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On the Road Without a Pulitzer

THOMAS SWICK

In the spring of 1990 I flew to Los Angeles to attend my first newspaper travel editors' meeting. I had become a travel editor the previous August, and, though in the succeeding months I had put out a weekly section, written a regular column, even taken a few trips (traveling for the first time in my life in the complicated atmosphere of somebody else's expense), the visit to California seemed like the true imprimatur of my new status. If I was attending a travel editors' meeting, then I must be a travel editor.

My immense satisfaction was based on the fact that this was something I had been working toward since college. Between my junior and senior years, craving foreign experience, I flew to London and got a job for the summer working in a bakery at Marble Arch. A year after graduation, in 1975, I moved to France. I was under the mistaken impression (at least in this country) that to be a travel writer one should speak another language. In Paris, on my way to school in Aix-en-Provence, I stepped into one of the large university bookstores off Boulevard St. Michel and came across a Penguin paperback titled *When the Going Was Good* by Evelyn Waugh. The cover carried a black-and-white photograph of an ancient automobile set in a desolate landscape, atop which an artist had painted the big orange curve of a setting sun. Next to the title were printed the words: "Everything the author wishes to preserve from his pre-war travel books." As an English major I had read Waugh—*Decline and Fall, A Handful Of Dust*—but none of my professors had ever mentioned his travel writing. There is a lot to be said for getting out of college.

I bought the book and took it to Aix where, because I was struggling to learn French, it became about the only written English I allowed myself over the next nine months. It was all I needed. The pleasure, as with all great travel books, was twofold: seeing a previously unimagined life and savoring the language that so wondrously describes it. As in Waugh's novels, the writing was both elegant and spare, restrained and hilarious. There were not just people—itself a welcome change from the endless landscapes of most travelogues—but unforgettable characters. And the eye for absurdity that Waugh brought so successfully to the English upper classes thrived in travel's vale of displacement, makeshiftness, and impending doom.

After that robust introduction to modern travel literature, I was hooked. It was a short if more strenuous trek over to Waugh's contemporaries: the learned though also funny Robert Byron and the more darkly comic Graham Greene, whose books on West Africa and Mexico had also been conveniently overlooked while we had sat in class dissecting *The Potting Shed.* I learned of the masters of an earlier era—Alexander Kinglake and George Borrow—and developed an affinity for the "sedentary" travel writers, those people who settled down in a place and made it their own: Freya Stark in the Arab world, Gerald Brenan in Spain, Norman Douglas in Italy, Lawrence Durrell and Patrick Leigh Fermor in Greece, M. F. K. Fisher in France, and Elliot Paul in Paris and Ibiza. They seemed to take travel writing out of its dilettante sphere and create with it a kind of novelistic anthropology.

I hope it will not alarm you to hear that none of these names came up at the newspa-

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per travel editors' meeting in Los Angeles. The major topic that weekend was "subsidized travel." My newspaper, like many others, had recently adopted a policy whereby I was not only forbidden to take free trips but not allowed to publish stories by writers who did. This was fine with me, since most of the people who worked that way, I'd quickly learned, had a breathless style and uncritical approach much better suited to advertising brochures.

In fact, during the two days of meetings and panels, the subject of writing never came up. Most of the other editors, I found out, had not set out to work in travel but had wandered into it by chance, sometimes as a reward for years of loyal service in news or sports. It occurred to me then that of the special-section editors at a newspaper—travel, fashion, food, home and garden—only we occupied a position that is viewed as requiring no particular expertise. Travel possesses no professional vocabulary (as does fashion) and demands no specialized knowledge (as do nutrition and horticulture). Fluency in a foreign language is immaterial because, hey, everybody speaks English now anyway. Maps are available for the geographically illiterate. Not only do most people travel, most people write postcards when they do: ergo, most anyone can be a travel editor.

On the final night of the meeting, one of the local editors hosted a party at her home. The bookcases in the living room were filled with guides and books on journalism and thick hardcover books of popular fiction; there was nothing in the way of travel literature. (Perhaps at the office.) Out on the patio I started talking to Jack Schnedler, the then travel editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and asked him how he had drifted into this line of work. He had been teaching happily at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, he said, when the *Sun-Times* called and offered him the job. Wanting some advice, he telephoned his old friend Jonathan Yardley at the *Washington Post*. "You know, Jack," Yardley told him, "they never give a Pulitzer to a travel writer."

An editor who overheard suggested, earnestly, that perhaps if our papers gave us the time and resources to do a thorough investigative series—on, say, airline safety—then maybe we could snag one. I had a less journalistic reaction, seeing it not so much a pronouncement on the biases of one politically charged committee in New York as a larger comment on the genre of travel writing as a whole. Be it Pulitzer-less walls or Borrow-free syllabuses—travel writing gets no respect.

It is not difficult to see why. Travel, for the majority of the population, is what you do when you're on vacation—that is, not working. At newspapers, the travel editor is envied more than even the film critic; people, when asked what they would do if they won the lottery, do not answer, "Go to movies." Paul Theroux, appearing last year on the *Today* show, told Bryant Gumbel that his new book was about the Mediterranean, to which Mr. Gumbel snickered, "Tough assignment." But as anyone who has ever done it seriously knows, it is not a lark. Writing about travel is sometimes like being the only waiter in an elegant restaurant: everyone else is having a good time and, no matter how fine the establishment, nothing changes the fact that you are condemned to work in it, solo.

But doesn't the reality of the art redeem the perception of the act? The travel writing most people see is that which appears in their Sunday newspaper, and most of that is abysmal. It has about as much to do with travel literature as day-time talk shows have to do with intellectual discourse. The very name of these sections is a misnomer for, with very few exceptions, they are in the business of tourism—telling people where and how to go and what to do and see and eat there—and are not interested in travel itself, with its noble connotations of discovery, wonder, and—harking back to its French root—*toil*. Newspaper travel sections have gone from the old days of florid passages of trumped-up delights to today's sterile consumerism of tips and information, becoming in the process the journalistic equivalent of the America that Georges Clemenceau described as having moved "directly from barbarism to degeneration without the usual interval of civilization."

It has always astounded me that the section of the paper that should feature the best writing—by virtue of its generous space, deadlines, and subject matter—consistently publishes the worst. Part of the answer, I think, is neglect. That the travel section is one of a newspaper's lowest priorities is evident every Sunday in the *New York Times*. It would be unthinkable for sections like Sports or Arts &

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Leisure not to carry one or two recognizable columnists, but in Travel this absence of a signature voice is pro forma. The Practical Traveler, weekly dispensing helpful advice, is a far cry from the atmospheric musings of George Vecsey (The Erudite Sportsman?). The enormous changes instituted at the paper over the last few years—affecting everything from the front page to the magazine—have left the Travel section virtually untouched, as if it were an element apart, like the basement that gets forgotten in the home remodeling. The fact that the photographs are now in color is little consolation; the writing still isn't. It is thorough, informed, and lifeless, surpassed in drama and sense of place by the hurried dispatches from the foreign correspondents up in the news section. The articles—no one would ever think to call them stories—are to be clipped by tourists with a predetermined itinerary, not read by people with a free afternoon. Almost as if in admission of this, the editors of the *New York Times* set aside a half page at the back for a thoughtful essay—a place for freelancers to spread their wings—but even these of late have become more functional, discussing ATMs and medical emergencies abroad.

The travel magazines are just as uninspiring, though with their healthier budgets they sometimes commission pieces from name writers who lend them an air of respectability. The biggest and glossiest are in some ways worse than newspapers, for with their incessant lists—"The 10 Best Small Hotels in Paris," "Five Secret Caribbean Getaways"—they introduce into travel a snob element. They are published not for travelers (again, despite the fact that the word in some form is an integral part of all of their titles), nor for readers, nor, for that matter, most tourists, but for a special sort of status-conscious sybarite. And much of their appeal is that they tell these people not just where to go and be seen but, by omission, where not to go.

Few professions, no matter how ignored they may be by others, will forgo the pleasure of honoring themselves, and ours is no exception. Part of every newspaper travel editors' meeting is the announcement of the winners of the annual Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Awards. The judges are selected faculty members at a distinguished school of journalism (currently Medill) so that, quite often, you have an award given by people who don't travel to someone who can't write in the name of a man nobody reads.

We need not spend much time here on the writers of guidebooks—the grunts of the profession. But it is interesting to note that out of their predominantly anonymous ranks emerged the best-known travel writer in America: Macon Leary, the hero of Anne Tyler's *The Accidental Tourist.* (The big boys—Frommer, Fodor, Birnbaum, et al.—are not so much writers as conglomerates.) Leary is the only travel writer ever to become the subject of a major motion picture, and in spite of his hopeless incuriousness, his unmitigated enmity for travel, he remains for me a kind of patron saint of the profession for his invaluable service in discrediting its paradisiacal image.

There has been one writer who has distinguished herself in this field: Kate Simon. Mostly overlooked today, Simon took the tired old chore of guidebook writing and turned it into an art form, interspersing the "facts" with elegant essays. (Nowadays, any efforts guidebooks make to dazzle come in the realm of graphics, not text.) Simon's works, fittingly subtitled *Uncommon Guidebooks,* are still worth reading because, even if the hotels have vanished, the essence, which was her true subject, hasn't. The "What else?" in the introduction to her Paris guide "What's north of the Boulevard Haussmann? . . . West of the Etoile? What else is there?"—is to sightseeing (a wholly inadequate word to describe her disciplined and sensual absorption of a place) what E. M. Forster's "Only connect!" is to human relations.

Simon rests honorably in the pantheon of literary travelers, those writers who are the royalty of the genre even though they are not always recognized as such by the commoners. Paul Theroux told me in an interview last year that he had recently attended a meeting in Ecuador of the Society of American Travel Writers. (This is the organization that presents the Lowell Thomas awards, and to tell you a little more about it—in fact, all you really need to know about it—Theroux is not a member, although his wife, who works in public relations, is.) One evening at dinner, Theroux was seated at a table with some people who, after proper introductions, politely asked, "So, Paul, what do you do?" "Now," Theroux said to me laughing, "if I were at a meeting of doctors, they'd know who I was."

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These writers are not all that well received in the literary world, either. Travel books do not win prizes, travel projects rarely get grants, travel writers are not invited to summer workshops. (Perhaps it's assumed they're always away.) In the pullulation of creative-writing courses at universities, travel writing is not a concern, an oversight that, admittedly, may work to its advantage. With the trivialization of *The New Yorker*, there remain few outlets for literary travel stories, *Granta* being about the only magazine (and it is a quarterly) that shows any consistent interest. As the *Atlantic* has become more hard-edged—preferring public policy to belles lettres—its travel pieces have gotten mushier. And yet good travel writing endures.

In 1980, Paul Fussell published *Abroad*, a brilliant examination of travel and travel writing in the years between the wars when, as Waugh had claimed, "the going was good." It was a rare, scholarly look at a much-neglected subject and would have given needed credibility to the genre—he compared Robert Byron's *The Road to Oxiana* to Joyce's *Ulysses* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*—if it hadn't at the same time announced the demise of travel. For Fussell believed that the pre-World War II age of travel had given way to an age of tourism, which, by its very demotic nature, was inimical to the cultivation of an individualistic art. The world after the war was one, to quote from the last sentence of the book, "in which the idea of literary traveling must seem quaint and a book about it a kind of elegy." It is an eloquent ending, but one maddeningly impervious to the persistence and mutability of the creative endeavor.

What made his verdict suspect was the fact that five years earlier Paul Theroux had published *The Great Railway Bazaar*. This rollicking account of his journey by train through Europe and Asia did what few travel books, or any other books for that matter, manage to do: it won both popular success and critical acclaim. Even Fussell admitted in *Abroad* that it "is one of the few travel books to emerge from our age of tourism."

Theroux was a struggling novelist, and seasoned expatriate, when he was enticed by the promise of his first advance. He had never written any travel. A few years ago he wrote an essay in *Granta* explaining the feelings he had had before that trip:

> I had always somewhat disliked travel books: they seemed self-indulgent, unfunny and rather selective. . . . It annoyed me that a traveller would suppress the moments of desperation or fear or lust, the details of meals, the names of books read to kill time, the conditions of toilets. I had done enough travelling to know that half of it was delay or nuisance—buses breaking down and hotel clerks being rude and market traders being rapacious. The truth of travel was interesting and off-key, and few people ever wrote about it.

Then he quoted a passage from Anthony Trollope's *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, followed by this: "Something human had happened, and Trollope recorded it: that, it seemed to me, was the essence of good travel writing."

The book, when it appeared, was true to his prejudices—it encompassed the world while marveling at the mundane: hairy brown sweaters in Istanbul, pornographic comic books in Japan. Theroux was the journeying Everyman, concentrating on what all tourists notice but then overlook in their conditioned rush to the Sights, blurting out what we all think, but out of politeness don't dare say (the paralyzing fear of being labeled the Ugly American). This earned him accusations of insensitivity, though truthfulness was his concern, the uncompromised response his modus operandi.

His demythologizing of travel came as a revelation, but in fact—as he himself admits—it was part of a long and honorable tradition: Alexander Kinglake had done similarly in *Eothen*, Mark Twain in *The Innocents Abroad*, Evelyn Waugh in *Labels*. With one instant best-seller, Theroux not only joined their ranks but revived a form that had been left for dead. The publication of *The Great Railway Bazaar* in 1975 did for travel writing what *All the President's Men*, published the preceding year, had done for journalism: it temporarily swelled the ranks.

Suddenly, everyone was into travel. By the 1980s, publishers were falling over each other trying to get travel titles onto their lists; three houses—Random House, Atlantic Monthly, Prentice Hall—created special travel series, the last one hiring Jan Morris as its editor. Morris, the doyenne of contemporary travel writers, was in the enviable position of suddenly being recognized in a field she'd been tilling, with trenchant whimsy, all along. Not

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surprisingly, she not only discovered new talents but reissued the works of old favorites, such as M. F. K. Fisher. In a similar vein, two separate houses, Playboy Press and Wideview Books, gathered the pieces of A. J. Liebling and published them in two indispensable volumes, *Liebling Abroad* and *Liebling at Home.* It became a propitious decade not just for inside traders but for readers who, like Waugh, preferred "all but the very worst travel books to all but the very best novels."

And there were quite a few bad ones. Some writers had learned the wrong lessons from Theroux, deploying transportation gimmicks—buses, bicycles, camels—to compensate for a lack of talent. Others took his personal approach too much to heart and became their own subjects, the place being visited serving simply as a scenic backdrop to the more important story of self. Mary Morris in Mexico transferred her ponderous self-reflections onto the slightly less small canvas of her gender, and in the process symbolized a new kind of travel writer who no longer specialized in a geographical region (like Freya Stark in Arabia) but in an emotional sphere. A lamentable narrowing of a famously broadening act.

Fussell's prediction partially bore itself out as Peter Mayle (*A Year in Provence, Toujours Provence*) became the age of tourism's sedentary answer to Gerald Brenan and Norman Douglas. People read his best-sellers not to learn about a region of France but to dream about retiring there themselves. In humorous travel, Dave Barry (*Dave Barry Does Japan*) has become the touristic reincarnation of S. J. Perelman.

But there have been many fine writers who have proved Fussell wrong. Patrick Leigh Fermor has provided a direct link back to the pre-war generation, publishing books in the 1970s and 1980s of a trip he took in the 1930s when, at the age of nineteen, he walked from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople. (As tangible proof of his anointment as its heir, he carried the rucksack, "rife with *mana,*" that Byron had taken to Mt. Athos, an artifact that should, if it still exists, be placed in the British Museum.) The first two volumes of Fermor's as yet unfinished trilogy, *A Time of Gifts* and *Between the Woods and the Water,* are intoxicatingly joyous works, ornate in style and infused with a boundless curiosity and youthful imperturbability. With his nimble mind, Fermor absorbs and assimilates everything in his path—customs, wildlife, architecture, languages—so that the impressive physical feat (made even more so by the fact that he set out in winter) takes a back seat to the real story of self-edification. Travel as university. Fermor wants us to marvel not at what he's doing, but what he's seeing—a valuable lesson for all writers of so-called adventure travel.

Already in 1962, with the publication of *The Middle Passage,* V. S. Naipaul showed himself to be working in that venerable British tradition whereby serious writers included in their repertoires—along with the novels and short stories and literary essays—books of travel. This tradition dates back to before World War I (see George Gissing's *By the Ionian Sea*) and has just about run its course. Yet Naipaul, like his younger and now late brother Shiva who followed shortly after, brought to its last days a modern twist: as a citizen of Trinidad, he was not a member of the colonizers—the traditional authors of travel books—but of the colonized. And he was Indian by birth, now living in England; as such, he possessed an impeccable outsider pedigree for chronicling our age of exile and migration. The harshness of tone he often employed—especially in his books on India—was redeemed by the seriousness of his purpose. Though often wickedly funny, he wrote with an intensity and a moral probing that made many of the pre-war practitioners, in retrospect, appear rather small. The travel book to Naipaul was not a holiday from fiction, a restful break between novels, but an experiential way of making sense of the world. And so it became to those who read him.

This symbiotic relationship—the fashion for travel writing bringing particular authors to light just as they, through their talents, enhanced its status—was evident elsewhere. Jan Morris, in addition to editing a new travel series, wrote intelligent, idiosyncratic essays of place for *Rolling Stone.* (Perhaps the most unprecedented of all the curious developments.) Norman Lewis, whose Indochina classic *A Dragon Apparent* was published in 1951, appeared with new works that advanced his reputation among travel writers, if not the general public, as one of the masters. Lewis has a predilection for out-of-the-way places and a nose for the bizarre, which he manages to describe with a combination of dry humor and solicitous understanding. (A sympathetic

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Waugh.) His *Voices of the Old Sea*, in its eloquent lament for a vanishing way of life, echoes Elliot Paul's *The Life and Death of a Spanish Town*. It is sedentary travel writing of the highest order and shows the age of tourism not nullifying his skills but giving him a subject (as his Catalonian fishing village is transmogrified into a resort). The scourge of tourism—"the great destroyer of customs and cultures, and the purveyor of uniformity," he wrote three years ago in *An Empire of the East: Travels in Indonesia*—has become, indirectly, his theme, as he ventures ever farther and deeper in pursuit of the authentic and the untouched.

With the new generation of travel writers there has emerged this same response to the age of mass tourism: not a surrender, but a change of direction and a refinement of method. As with Lewis, this has sent some off to even more remote outposts. In the mid-1970s, Bruce Chatwin traveled to Patagonia, "a country in South America, at the far end of the world." The result of that journey, *In Patagonia*, sparkled onto the scene in 1977 and quickly became *The Road to Oxiana* of the late twentieth century. Like Byron, Chatwin possessed impressive scholarship, a somewhat unbecoming sense of adventure, and a pious fascination with the arcane. His elliptical style has been blamed for inspiring a large school of lesser imitators, but in his hands, and with his near-perfect eye (and ear), it was lapidary. During his short life (he died in 1989 at the age of forty-eight, twelve years older than Byron at his death), he did more than any of his contemporaries to elevate the reputation of travel writing, to herald the idea that it could be art.

More recently Redmond O'Hanlon—in both his Amazonian book *In Trouble Again* and *Into the Heart of Borneo*—has entertainingly shown that the possibility of adventure still exists. The young and gifted Pico Iyer visited, in *Falling Off the Map*, the world's "lonely places": Paraguay, Bhutan, North Korea, among others. And Colin Thubron's latest addition to his lofty canon, *The Lost Heart of Asia*, recounts his journeys through the Central Asian countries of the former Soviet Union.

The flight from tourism also has had a converse effect, sending some writers headlong into the domestic: to discover not the places people traditionally travel to but those they travel from, as if they, perennially unnoticed and unlimned, remained the final frontier. Naipaul's last travel book, *A Turn in the South*, describes a circuitous journey beginning in Atlanta and ending in Chapel Hill and features, along the way, thoughtful reflections on the legacy of slavery and an almost ornithologically intense sighting of a "redneck." Jonathan Raban followed his first travel book, *Arabia* (inspired by a magazine assignment to profile Freya Stark; lineage again), with *Old Glory*, about a slow trip in a small motorboat down the Mississippi River. Stopping at small towns, sitting in bars, attending church suppers, befriending towboat captains, Raban discovered, and then memorably captured, the liquidy heart of America. His was the best contemporary travel book on the United States until 1990, when he published *Hunting Mister Heartbreak*. Though less thematic than *Old Glory*—the author sets up house in a handful of geographically diverse cities and towns—it is more comprehensive and profound, studded with brilliant insights and occasionally stupefying conclusions. And in its highly analytical approach, it demonstrates the second major influence that the age of tourism has had on travel writing.

In a time when it sometimes seems that everyone has been everywhere (and when there is a Travel Channel for those who haven't), travel writing is deprived of its old role as a provider of images. It must go beyond pictures and root out meanings. As a result, writers rarely wander aimlessly anymore; they go with a specific purpose, their journeys possess a theme. At times, this is simply a hook to catch a publisher's interest—searching for *beisbol* in Central America, the pink-headed duck in the Himalayas—but often it is a sophisticated study. In *The Songlines*, Chatwin used the story of Australia's wandering Aboriginals to meditate on the idea of nomadism. In *Video Night in Kathmandu*, Iyer explored the impact on Asia of Western culture and came up with findings that were alternately comic and numbing. Both are perfect examples of the new kind of travel book that not only opens up the world but helps explain it.

Current events sometimes come into play, as P. J. O'Rourke has shown in books like *Holidays in Hell* and *Give War a Chance*. Though more ideological than S. J. Perelman, he has become his true successor, for underlying the humor is, often, a deft understanding of the

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culture. The most triumphant example of this development—the travel writer as eyewitness—is James Fenton's *All the Wrong Places: Adrift in the Politics of the Pacific Rim.* Writing on the fall of Saigon, for example, Fenton uses his poetic sensibilities to give us not only beautifully crafted scenes but revealing asides, like the list of the books he collected at the looting of the American embassy: "*The Road from War* by Robert Shaplen, Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (which I had been meaning to read for some time). . . ." He is the classic bumbling Englishman, magnificently out of place, but with—what seems like—a modern sense of engagement. His description of getting duped by a Vietnamese woman with a "sick" infant, as they taxi frantically around the city in search of a doctor, is one of the most unforgettable moments in contemporary travel.

And as the emphasis of travel books has become more defined, the writing has become more complex. Landscapes, which once needed only to be described, must now be interpreted. Naipaul was already doing this in *The Middle Passage* when he wrote of the derivative mansions on Port of Spain's Maraval Road: "This was the taste of the old Trinidad: individual, anarchic, not arising out of the place . . . but created out of memories." Thubron has done it continuously—from the Levant to Russia to China to Central Asia. Raban is an artist of geographic interpretive genius. After the Mississippi floods, he wrote in *Granta*:

> Flying to Minneapolis from the West, you see it as a theological problem.
>
> The great flat farms of Minnesota are laid out in a ruled grid, as empty of surprises as a sheet of graph paper. Every gravelled path, every ditch has been projected along the latitude and longitude lines of the township-and-range-survey system. The farms are square, the fields are square, the houses are square; if you could pluck their roofs off from over people's heads, you'd see families sitting at square tables in the dead centre of square rooms. Nature has been stripped, shaven, drilled, punished and repressed in this right-angled, right-thinking Lutheran country. It makes you ache for the sight of a rebellious curve or the irregular, dappled colour of a field where a careless farmer has allowed corn and soybeans to cohabit.
>
> But there are no careless farmers on this flight path. The landscape is open to your inspection—as to God's—as an enormous advertisement for the awful rectitude of the people. There are no funny goings-on down here, it says; we are plain upright folk, fit candidates for heaven.
>
> Then the river enters the picture—a broad, serpentine shadow that sprawls unconformably across the checkerboard. Deviously winding . . . the Mississippi looks as if it had been put here to teach the godfearing Midwest a lesson about stubborn and unregenerate nature. Like John Calvin's bad temper, it presents itself as the wild beast in the heart of the heartland.

It is as if the world's evolution—or devolution—from the age of travel to the age of tourism has, paradoxically, sent travel writing back to the earlier and more enlightened age of exploration (be it now physical or intellectual or a combination of both). And as a result, the genre has expanded its capabilities while it has enlarged our globe.

Last year *Harper's* magazine published an essay on travel writing that was much less sanguine. The author, Sallie Tisdale, complained that today's practitioners were grumpy, self-absorbed, and lacking the "generosity and good heart" of their pre-war predecessors. The new age, in her view, had not elevated their efforts but had made them weak, as they wandered miserably and sniped at the tourists they feared they'd become. Yet some of the people she used to illustrate her point—the jovial adventurer O'Hanlon, the meticulous renter Raban—were not particularly well chosen, while half a dozen others—Fermor, Lewis, Fenton, Thubron, Iyer, and a much-mellowed Naipaul—were conspicuously absent.

More disturbing than the individual attacks, however, was the implied belief that travel writers should resemble, in attitude and approach, those of an earlier generation. No critic would be so naïve as to suggest this of any other creative group—sculptors, composers, novelists: we all expect their work to reflect their times. To regard travel writers as removed from this arrangement is to place them on the artistic scale lower than comedians—down there, give or take a few camels, with the circus.

The world has changed and travel writers have changed with it, which is natural and not noteworthy, especially since the world is their subject. What is regrettable is that the general opinion of them hasn't changed—even now, when they are as good as they have ever been.

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*Paradelle for Susan**

BILLY COLLINS

I will remember the quick, nervous bird of your love.
I will remember the quick, nervous bird of your love.
Always perched on the thinnest, highest branch.
Always perched on the thinnest, highest branch.
Thinnest love, remember the quick branch.
Nervous, I always will, perched on your highest bird the.

It is time for me to cross the mountain.
It is time for me to cross the mountain.
And find another shore to darken with my pain.
And find another shore to darken with my pain.
Another pain for me to darken the mountain.
And find the time, cross my shore, to with it is to.

The weather warm, the handwriting familiar.
The weather warm, the handwriting familiar.
Your letter flies from my hand into the waters below.
Your letter flies from my hand into the waters below.
The familiar waters below my warm hand.
Into handwriting your weather flies you letter the from the.

I will always cross the highest letter, the thinnest bird.
Below the waters of my warm familiar pain,
Another hand to remember your handwriting.
The weather perched for me on the shore.
Quick, your nervous branch flew from love.
Darken the mountain, time and find was my into it was with to to.

**The paradelle is one of the more demanding French fixed forms, first appearing in the langue d'oc love poetry of the eleventh century. It is a poem of four six-line stanzas in which the first and second lines, as well as the third and fourth lines of the first three stanzas, must be identical. The fifth and sixth lines, which traditionally resolve these stanzas, must use all the words from the preceding lines and only those words. Similiarly, the final stanza must use every word from all the preceding stanzas and only these words.*

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The Berg

DANA GIOIA

Most major European libraries, universities, and museums grew slowly over centuries. Begun as private or ecclesiastical enterprises, they developed according to no particular plan under the inconsistent guidance of successive popes, emperors, queens, bishops, and barons. By contrast, many great American cultural institutions seem to have been created from sheer force of will by individuals with a long-term vision and colossal self-confidence. If the Louvre, Hermitage, Vatican Library, and British Museum embody the impersonal, almost timeless, and public quality of European institutions, then American cultural aspirations most clearly express themselves in such idealistic and even idiosyncratic enterprises as the Barnes Foundation, Cloisters, Morgan Library, Norton Simon Museum, and Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Even as these institutions grow over time, they continue to reflect the taste and ideals of their founders.

One of these distinctively American institutions is the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library. Housed in the magnificent Beaux-Arts central building on Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature was established only in 1940, but it already ranks among the greatest literary archives of the English-speaking world. The story behind the Berg Collection is also quintessentially American—a self-made millionaire spends his final years using his fortune to build a public institution. Leland Stanford, Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Mellon, J. Paul Getty, Henry E. Huntington, and Albert Barnes are familiar American archetypes, but such outsize and ostentatious philanthropists would seem anomalous in modern Europe. Who could imagine an Italian Andrew Carnegie or a French John D. MacArthur? The chronicle of a large fortune made and given away in a single lifetime is largely a New World phenomenon. An astonishing number of American plutocrats have been less interested in founding a family dynasty than in perpetuating their own tastes and values.

If the lives of Henry and Albert Berg were not conducted on so grand a scale as a Carnegie or Huntington, they display the same pattern of self-made men. Henry Woolfe Berg, the oldest of eight children, was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1858 and emigrated with his family to New York in 1862. His father, who had hoped to study medicine in Vienna, became a tailor in America, but, in the classic Jewish immigrant mold, he resolved that his children would gain the education he had missed. At eleven, Henry took a part-time job at the Cooper Institute (now Cooper Union) Library, a position that reinforced his already deep love of books. He became known to Peter Cooper when he zealously refused the founder entrance to his own library because he failed to show identification. When Cooper later brought William Cullen Bryant to the library, Henry recited part of "Thanatopsis" to its author. Listening to the performance, the two prosperous old men never guessed that the sweet irony of American life would allow that boy's future fortune to endow his own library next to a park bearing the poet's name. Nor could they imagine that seventy years later the boy's youngest brother would present a manuscript of that famous poem to the collection. Not even Charles Dickens, the young Berg's favorite author, could have concocted such an outlandishly neat rags-to-riches plot twist.

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After his father's death in 1881, Henry, now Dr. Berg, became a surrogate parent to his youngest brother, Albert, who was fourteen years his junior. Albert also became a doctor. The two brothers never married and happily shared living quarters until Henry's death. They also shared a passion for literature. Their literary tastes were conventional in an age when conventional taste was both selective and refined. If their fascination with Dickens seemed slightly old-fashioned in 1940, today it seems almost prescient; Dickens now stands with George Eliot as one of the two greatest Victorian novelists. The brothers gradually assembled a distinguished personal library of their favorite authors as well as famous books of English and American literature in rare editions. The Bergs also began assembling a real-estate empire in lower Manhattan. Book collecting aside, the brothers lived frugally. Albert did not even own a car.

When Henry Berg died in 1938, Albert was desolate. The two brothers had been lifelong companions. Albert had already retired early from his surgical position at Mount Sinai Hospital. He had a sizable fortune and no children. He needed a new project for his considerable energies. Before Henry's death, the brothers had discussed creating a rare-books collection at the New York Public Library, but no final decision had been made. Now Albert resolved to found such a collection in Henry's memory. Once undertaken, the project consumed his attention until his death in 1951. During his years in medicine and real estate, Berg had established the political connections to make his plan possible, and the lifelong passion he had shared with his oldest brother provided the emotional impetus for the dream.

The Berg Collection reflects the distinctively entrepreneurial character of American philanthropy. Having decided to establish a literary research collection bearing the family name, Albert Berg determined that it should be a great one. He pursued this goal with the same acumen that he had earlier exercised in building his real-estate portfolio. Why shouldn't a man's posterity be managed as ingeniously as his capital? This was a great era of American cultural philanthropy. In 1934 John D. Rockefeller had initiated construction of the new Cloisters on land he had donated in upper Manhattan. Five years later the new Museum of Modern Art opened in mid-town on land also donated by Rockefeller. Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., Andrew Mellon had financed the National Gallery of Art.

Mellon's strategy in erecting a huge, nearly empty museum resembles Berg's ultimate approach in endowing his collection. If new American cultural enterprises were to achieve parity with established institutions, they must be built boldly—not by gradual individual acquisitions but by obtaining collections en bloc. In 1931, Mellon purchased twenty-one masterpieces from the Hermitage in a secret deal with the cash-hungry Soviets. He also acquired the large Thomas B. Clarke collection of American portraits intact. Just months before his death, Mellon bought a town house full of Old Masters for his still unopened museum. (However driven to obtain great paintings, Mellon could never be persuaded to buy a nude.) By 1942 the National Gallery had almost miraculously achieved parity with great European museums through the nearly simultaneous gifts of the Mellon, Kress, and Widener collections of Old Masters. Earlier in the century Huntington had built his new library by acquiring entire private libraries. Berg shaped his new enterprise with equally ambitious vision.

When Dr. Albert Berg formally offered his gift to the New York Public Library on February 6, 1940, his collection consisted of 3,500 volumes. The initial bequest reflected thirty years of serious collecting by the two brothers. Kept in a town house on East Seventy-third Street off Fifth Avenue, it represented a superb example of what traditionally was called a "gentleman's library" and displayed the brothers' personal passion for Dickens and Thackeray. The Bergs also collected "high-spots," great bibliophilic rarities, as defined by the Grolier Club's 1902 connoisseur's bible, *One Hundred Books Famous in English Literature* (of which the brothers had assembled sixty works). The range and character of the original gift, therefore, differed significantly from what the Berg eventually became. It was overwhelmingly a collection of rare books with little manuscript or archival material beyond a few Victorian novelists who were special favorites of the owners. No one cataloging the original inventory—which contained such rarities as first editions of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590–96), Chapman's Homer (1616), George Herbert's *The Temple* (1633), Browne's

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Religio Medici (1642), and Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), as well as whole walls of nineteenth-century novels in fine bindings—would have predicted that the Berg Collection would ultimately become one of the world's great archives of literary manuscripts, correspondence, diaries, and personal effects, with special depth in the twentieth century.

Viewing his personal library now from a public perspective, Dr. Berg must have sensed that, for all its individual splendors, it was not yet a great collection by the standards of major research libraries. Almost immediately after announcing his gift, he took audacious steps to broaden its depth and coverage. Now that he was buying for a public institution dedicated to his brother's memory rather than for private gratification, Dr. Berg, who had always taken the bus to work, abandoned his characteristic dislike of extravagance and started collecting on a grand scale. In 1940, while workmen remodeled the third-floor room in the library to house the initial 3,500 volumes, the doctor acquired, in toto, one of the major private literary collections in America—the library of W. T. H. Howe. The former president of the American Book Company, Howe had died the previous year, leaving behind 16,000 books and manuscripts.

Not only did the Howe purchase effectively quadruple the size of the Berg bequest, it changed its character. Howe had collected rare books, but also manuscripts, letters, and association copies. He had even collected personal items and furniture, such as Charles Dickens's desk, which now stands in the corner of the Collection's reading room directly under Dr. Henry Berg's portrait. (Vladimir Nabokov's special standing desk will eventually be placed underneath the younger doctor's portrait.) Some of the strange literary relics now found in the Berg—Elizabeth Barrett Browning's slippers, Lewis Carroll's photograph of Alice Pleasance Liddell (the model for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*), Charlotte Brontë's portable escritoire, William Thackeray's pen—presumably originated in the Howe trove. This acquisition transformed the Berg Collection from a rare-book library to a complete literary archive.

Patience is not a virtue conspicuous among self-made men. Excited now by the possibility of creating a literary research collection of international stature, Dr. Berg made a second, decisive acquisition. On May 5, 1941, less than seven months after the Collection's dedication and while carpenters were still refitting an adjacent gallery to provide room for the Howe material, the New York Public Library announced that the Owen D. Young collection would come to the Berg. Young, the former chairman of both General Electric and RCA, had built an extraordinary private collection of more than 15,000 books and manuscripts. He and Berg had never met, but Robert Lingel, the library's chief of acquisitions, had negotiated a confidential deal between the two men that resulted in a joint donation. Young felt an old-fashioned sense of public stewardship about his collection. He claimed to be its "trustee" rather than its owner, and he had allowed scholars access to the books and papers. Without Berg's intervention, Young's collection would probably have been dispersed. The Depression had destroyed the finances of the collector who had once spent $373,000 at a single pre-Crash auction. Young had not only stopped buying books, but, after his wife's death, he had put his huge collection in storage. Only Berg's co-sponsorship of the donation made the gift possible.

The Young gift surpassed even the Howe collection in scope and quality. Its acquisition secured the Berg's stature among American research repositories, and its addition permanently redefined the Collection as a comprehensive literary archive. Although Young had been a voracious buyer of rare editions, he had a special passion for manuscripts, especially working drafts that revealed a writer in the act of creation. His wife, a former English teacher, had shared this enthusiasm. Once for a Christmas present he gave her the manuscript of Robert Burns's "My luve is like a red, red rose." Young had gradually accumulated substantial manuscript holdings from Pope, Burns, Scott, Goldsmith, Byron, Coleridge, Tennyson, Carroll, Kipling, and Twain. He had also found certain items of spectacular rarity such as the Westmoreland manuscript of John Donne's sonnets and elegies. Written around 1620 in the hand of the poet's amanuensis, Rowland Woodward, these vellum-bound sheets represent the major surviving contemporary manuscript of Donne's poetry. Three of Donne's "Holy Sonnets" are found only in this manuscript, and the text contains possible revisions by the poet from earlier ver-

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sions. Young also owned George Eliot's commonplace book and Boswell's letter soliciting subscriptions for a monument to Dr. Johnson. Sometimes Young had even bought manuscripts en bloc, such as the papers of the novelist Fanny Burney and her family.

Young owned fascinating association copies, among them Alexander Pope's copy of Milton's *Poems* (1645). The young Pope had taught himself to write by carefully imitating printed typeface, and in this volume one finds two scrupulously copied poems by Milton in Pope's meticulous hand. Young obtained the copy of Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1658), which Charles Lamb had bought for Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who in turn later gave the volume now marked with his annotations to Sara Hutchinson with an inscribed letter in the flyleaf. Young also collected authors' personal copies of their own books. He found, for example, Coleridge's first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), in which the author has corrected and expanded his own poems, including "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Young owned perhaps the most delightful association copy in the Berg, the blue morocco-bound volume of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1866) that Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) inscribed for Alice Liddell.

When the Berg's first public exhibition, devoted appropriately to Dickens, opened in the newly rebuilt gallery on December 16, 1941, the Collection's identity was firmly established. The show demonstrated that the Berg's holdings in this classic English author were comparable to anything in the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert Museum, which had jointly inherited Dickens's papers; the opening also signaled the Collection's commitment to public education.

An institution's architecture and interior design usually communicate its goals more clearly than any written statement. The Berg's adjoining Reading Room and Exhibition Gallery did not merely announce its double objective of general education and scholarly research, they also suggested that these goals were not necessarily exclusive. The large exhibition space, the carefully arranged displays—which included some of the Collection's rarest possessions—and the informative captions welcomed a common reader who had not been traditionally welcome at most research libraries. The Berg allowed free public admission—a policy that has been maintained up to the present. No wonder these imaginatively curated shows gradually became significant features in New York literary life.

In retrospect, the Dickens opening marked an astonishing achievement. In less than two years, Dr. Albert Berg had conceived, endowed, constructed, and stocked a major research library. Significantly, he had not placed his collection at a university or museum but in an urban public library. One wonders how many among the crowds that moved through the inaugural exhibition sensed that they were at the end of an era in American culture. A week earlier the Japanese had attacked the American fleet, and the nation was now at war in Europe and in Asia. The decade of social and cultural change that had begun with Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration in January 1933 effectively ended with Pearl Harbor.

This idealistic era had temporarily merged the goals of popular and elitist culture. The conjunction of high and low sensibilities did not always yield happy results; it could descend into agitprop or kitsch. At its best, however, the period created some of the finest and most distinctively American art. Novels such as Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*, critical writing such as Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station* and Van Wyck Brooks's *New England: Indian Summer*, movies such as Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, Preston Sturges's *Sullivan's Travels*, and John Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath*; plays such as Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!*, the populist modernism of such poets as Robinson Jeffers, Langston Hughes, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, the symphonic music of Samuel Barber, Roy Harris, and Aaron Copland—all reminded contemporary audiences that excellence and accessibility were not mutually exclusive virtues. The creation of institutions to support public culture coincided with this populist strain in the arts. Museums, concert halls, and libraries were built—just as journals, lecture series, and small presses were started—in the conviction that democracy required the highest possible levels of public education. The Berg Collection reflects the era's faith that high culture need not abandon civic responsibility.

Joining the ranks of such institutions as the Houghton, the Morgan, and the Huntington,

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the Berg also symbolized the increasing role Jewish philanthropy played in American culture—an insight surely not lost at the Collection's dedication presided over by Dr. Berg, New York Governor Herbert Lehman, and Mayor Fiorello La Guardia (whose wife was Jewish). Jewish philanthropy was hardly new, but only recently had it taken the lead in reshaping New York cultural life. In 1939, while Dr. Berg negotiated the terms of his gift with the library, Solomon Guggenheim opened his Museum of Non-objective Art to the public. Meanwhile the Ninety-second Street Young Men's Hebrew Association offered its first season of poetry readings with appearances by William Carlos Williams, Genevieve Taggard, W. H. Auden, and Langston Hughes. Initiating what would become the nation's most celebrated series of literary readings at a local community organization, the YMHA reached out beyond its own constituency to enrich the artistic life of New York. Like the Guggenheim and YMHA, the Berg represented Jewish cultural aspirations in all the idealism and innocence of an era that the brutality of World War II would soon end.

The Berg endowment provided for a full-time curator and a budget for future acquisitions. From the beginning, the curator's job was, along with maintaining the existing collection, to direct its growth. The Berg has been fortunate in its direction. Only four curators have served since its inception—John D. Gordan (1940–1968), Lola L. Szladits (1968–1990), Francis O. Mattson (1991–1995), and the newly appointed Rodney Phillips. (Lisa Brower also served as acting curator in 1995.) These curators have built the Collection's holdings, which have grown from approximately 35,000 items at its opening in 1941 to more than 150,000 today; and they have also greatly expanded its scope.

At the time of Dr. Berg's death in 1950, the Collection included about 40,000 items, roughly half of them manuscripts. Although the holdings ranged from the fifteenth century to the present, there was little medieval or Renaissance material. The Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Restoration periods were better represented. The Berg owns copies of all four Shakespeare Folios. It was only with the eighteenth century, however, that the Berg achieved real depth, with substantial manuscript material such as the drafts of the first three books of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* and autographs of Fanny Burney's novels, *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, and *Camilla*, as well as a large collection of letters by Thomas Gray and Samuel Johnson. By the time its holdings reached the nineteenth century, the Berg ranked with any literary archive in the world. The accumulation of printed books, as John Gordan phrased it, "was gratifyingly close to completion." Some famously rare volumes, among them Poe's *Tamerlane* and Browning's *Pauline*, were present in multiple copies. The manuscripts were equally impressive. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for example, was represented by thirty manuscripts, three notebooks, and more than one hundred autograph letters. There were three hundred Thackeray letters and five hundred Dickens letters. In contrast, the Berg's holdings in twentieth-century authors was modest.

In defining the Berg's future, John Gordan made a crucial decision. While filling in the Collection's holdings of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century material, the Berg would devote a substantial portion of its resources to build an archive of modern literature. Gordan's early commitment to pursuing twentieth-century material proved decisive in shaping the Berg's future identity. In 1950, few American institutions (and virtually no libraries abroad) actively collected the manuscripts of modern authors. By 1980 such special collections were common; in America, libraries competed intensely for contemporary material, and national organizations had been established in Britain to keep documents from going abroad. Today it would be impossible for any library, no matter how well endowed, to build collections of modern literature equal to those of a pioneering institution such as the Berg.

The status of a research library is usually measured in two ways: its highspots and its depth. What important individual items does the collection possess, and what significant authors and subjects does it represent in unsurpassed detail? By either measure, the Berg now ranks among the four or five greatest collections of modern literature in the English-speaking world. It contains the most extensive archives of such modern writers as W. H. Auden, Randall Jarrell, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Vladimir Nabokov, Sean O'Casey, and Virginia Woolf, as well as major collections of manuscript material for Joseph Conrad, E. E.

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Cummings, T. S. Eliot, Robert Graves, Lady Gregory, Jack Kerouac, Howard Moss, May Sarton, James Stephens, Edward Thomas, and William Butler Yeats. It also possesses the archival material from such influential institutions as the Abbey Theatre, Provincetown Players, and the Group Theatre. The Berg's highspots include drafts and manuscripts of *The Wild Swans at Coole, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, To the Lighthouse, The Secret Sharer, Juno and the Paycock, Speak, Memory, The Age of Anxiety,* and what may be the most interesting modernist manuscript in existence: the drafts of *The Waste Land* with Ezra Pound's transfiguring revisions alongside Vivien Eliot's annotations.

On occasion the Berg Collection acquires a major writer's entire archive—the voluminous papers of Vladimir Nabokov and Virginia Woolf are two such examples. More often curators build an archive by steady, concentrated effort over many years. The Berg's superb collection of Cummings materials, for example, developed in stages. "Prior to 1970," wrote Francis Mattson, "E. E. Cummings was almost a non-presence in the Berg Collection, represented by only four small books." Then in 1970 the literary material from the estate of the poet's widow, Marion Morehouse Cummings, came to the Collection—part gift, part purchase. This cache included the copies of his books the poet had fancifully inscribed and illustrated for her during their twenty-eight-year marriage, as well as his own copies, which contained many corrections and notations. There were also letters, paintings, business records, photographs, and personal effects, including his Royal typewriter and a plaster cast of his hand. In 1971 another cache was presented anonymously, which contained more drawings and photographs. In 1986 the Berg purchased James Sibley Watson, Jr.'s *Dial* magazine papers, which included extensive correspondence and manuscripts. Watson, Cummings's closest friend, had papers that dated from 1917 to the poet's death in 1962. The Berg's Cummings collection is now probably second only to the official archive at Harvard.

The Berg Collection's acquisitions program continues to bring its holdings up to the present with the archives of living authors as diverse as Julia Alvarez, Paul Auster, John Haines, Donald Justice, Alfred Kazin, Kenneth Koch, Philip Levine, and V. S. Pritchett. Supplementing these author collections are institutional archives held in the New York Public Library's Rare Books and Manuscript Division, which include the files of *The New Yorker,* and the publishing firms of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Alfred A. Knopf, Macmillan, Ecco Press, and the Century Company. Together these collections afford an extraordinarily comprehensive view of twentieth-century letters. They also provide an inexhaustible inventory from which to mount the Berg's celebrated exhibitions, which have run continuously for more than half a century.

Over the last six decades the Berg has developed in ways its founder might not have predicted. It is difficult to imagine the elegantly old-fashioned Dr. Berg sitting at his desk with the crayon-decorated typescript of Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues.* Yet who could doubt his satisfaction at the scope and excellence of the current collection? His ambitions for his new enterprise have been fully realized. Among North American literary archives the Berg now stands unsurpassed, with holdings equaled by only four other research institutions—the Houghton Library at Harvard, the Beinecke Library at Yale, the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas in Austin, and the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. Entrepreneurial philanthropy, clearly, has its advantages.

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Fear and Hatred

JOHN LUKACS

I read a small collection of interesting historical documents. They are a secretary's records of the highly secret meetings of the Soviet Russian Politburo in late October 1956, during the Hungarian Revolution, twelve days that stunned the world, and especially the Soviet world. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the oddest documents from Soviet archives have become available to all kinds of researchers (often in exchange for private payments, usually in dollars). The evaluation of these documents is, of course, another matter. A document never speaks by itself. And it is this inner, hermeneutic, meaning of these Soviet documents with which I am now concerned and which sparked my conception of this essay whose scope goes well beyond the content of these newly revealed materials. Their content, though interesting, did not tell me much more than what I already knew or, at least, suspected: that the top leaders of the Soviet Union were shocked by the extent—and by the potential consequences—of the anti-Communist rising in Hungary; and that they were unsure and divided among themselves about how to respond to it.

One remarkable matter in these records is the cramped nature of the calculations and tergiversations preoccupying Khrushchev and his colleagues. That was owing to the fatal limitations of Communism. Yes: it is obvious that the government of the Soviet Union could not tolerate the sudden establishment of an anti-Communist national government within the Russian imperial sphere. But: whom could they rely on? So many of these high and secret discussions in the Kremlin were concerned with the relative merits or demerits of various Hungarian "comrades," or top Communists in Hungary. Yet Khrushchev and Co. were vaguely but deeply aware of the unpopularity of the locals, while fearful of considering anyone else: to find and then help to install a reliable "comrade" was the best they could imagine. That kind of worry and fear also explains their strange decision to elicit and assure the support of the Yugoslav Tito. Secretly, in a small airplane bumping through the East European night, Khrushchev flew to see Tito (with whom he had only recently made up, seven years after Stalin had expelled Tito from the international Communist camp) to obtain his agreement to the imminent Russian crushing of the national rising in Hungary and to the installation of János Kádár as the head of a "workers' and peasants'" government. In these discussions—and in the ugly consequences that followed, including the Yugoslavs' surrender of their asylum temporarily given to some of the reformed Hungarian Communist leaders—Tito comes out as badly as Khrushchev, but that is not the point. The point is these Communist leaders' *fear.*

This is a crucial element. Brutality is endemic in the nature of totalitarian governments, and brutality is often a reaction to some real or imagined injury and fear. In 1944, Hitler's Third Reich suddenly occupied Hungary—its ally and so-called satellite—knowing that certain leaders in Hungary had wished and had made uncertain attempts to detach their country from its fatal alliance with the German Reich. In 1956 it was Khrushchev and Soviet Russia that did not al-

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low Hungary to depart from Communist rule. But there were profound differences in these brutal interventions. The Germans—and their local allies—were not fearful. The Russians—and their local allies—were. (Can anyone imagine Hitler flying at midnight to see Mussolini or Antonescu to seek their support for a brutal decision that he had already made?—even when his Reich was besieged on all fronts by enormous armies, which the Soviet Union in 1956 clearly was not.)

Of course Khrushchev was not Hitler, and Russians are not Germans, and 1956 was not 1944; but there is, I think, more to it than that. It is one of the probably fundamental remaining differences between extremes of the Right and those of the Left. Hatred moves the former; fear the latter.

It was not always thus. One hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago, the old "Right," authoritarian kingdoms and dukedoms, the conservatives and the aristocracies and their police, were fearful of the ideas of the French revolution, of their attractions, and of their potential representatives. This is what, a generation before Victor Hugo or Dumas, Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma* is about, a book that *circa* 1945 some French and American intellectuals rediscovered as a literary paradigm, a microcosm of an early "totalitarian" regime. The Left (young then, but not now) hated such regimes. That hatred breathes through the writings of such otherwise different men as Marx and the Russian revolutionaries of the nineteenth century. They hate the rulers and the police, and when they fear them, that fear is mixed with contempt.

Then—some time after 1870—came a change. Nationalism was replacing the older forms of patriotism, and it proved to be an even stronger and more lasting cement for the masses of people than their consciousness about the struggle of classes. Its extreme representations and incarnations involved more than a dislike of foreigners; it included a contemptuous hatred of people within their own country whom such nationalists saw as being insufficiently or even treasonably non-nationalistic. This was no longer an aristocratic or even a conservative phenomenon but a populist one. It manifested itself in a great variety of nations and states; it attracted many revolutionary young; and their opponents soon learned to fear them.

In the history of the world, the Communist revolution in Russia in 1917 was an anomaly. Seventy years after Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, the working classes in every capitalist country were generally immune to Communism. There were no successful Communist revolutions anywhere, except for Russia—a country that Marx (at least for a long time) categorically excluded from his projections of Communism. All of this is well known. Less well known are the evidences of how Communist leaders were afraid of their nationalist opponents. A few days before their uprising in St. Petersburg, Lenin's cohorts thought it useful to address the Cossack regiments in St. Petersburg on posters, with the heading: "Cossacks! Brethren!"—this to these most hated and feared military symbols of the old regime. (Imagine French or Italian Communists thus addressing the Fascist militias or the SS.) The Bolsheviks were right: the Cossacks in 1917 were not inclined to risk their skins in defense of Kerensky and Co., those loquacious townies in their frock coats.

A minuscule example, I admit. But further evidences are protean. In the acts of the short-lived Communist attempts in Europe in 1919 (in Munich or in Budapest)—including their most revolting terrorist acts—there is always the underlying, and often very apparent, element of fear: fear of their unpopularity, fear of their adversaries, not only among the former ruling classes but among the masses. The same kind of fear was even more evident—and persistent—among the Communist rulers of the states of Eastern Europe after 1945, no matter how entrenched they were by Stalin. And when it comes to international Communists, both before and after the last war, it does not take a psychologist to detect fear, even stronger than hatred, among them: the fear of being in a minority, typical of most Communist intellectuals.

Of course fear, like all other primal human phenomena, is not simple, and it is often allied, if not combined, with hatred. But I think that it is an acceptable generalization to state that, at least in the Western world, the ideas of Communist and pro-Communist intellectuals in the twentieth century were inseparable from their fears; their fears of oppressive capitalism and of its agents, their fear of "fascists,"

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of "reactionaries," of the nationalist masses, of the conspiratorial powers of their opponents—compensated or, rather, clothed by their intellectual belief that their ideology was the only progressive one, marking the path to the future, their future.

This does not mean that all Communists were cowards. A sense of fear and an inclination to cowardice are not the same things. "Courage is grace under pressure," Hemingway wrote. Tell this to a Marine in a foxhole on Iwo Jima: bullshit about bullfighting, he would say. Courage is the ability to overcome one's fear, someone else said; and that is something that every combat soldier knows in the marrow of his bones. For one thing, Stalin was not a coward. Yet it was fear of his *potential*, rather than *actual*, opponents that explains the senseless and brutal extent of his purges in the 1930s; and when he and Molotov finally, and reluctantly, realized that Hitler was invading Russia, their immediate reactions were among the most abject ones in the history of statesmanship. Hitler had declared his war, his planes were bombing Russian towns, thousands of German tanks were driving across the Russian frontier in clouds of dust; and Stalin's ambassador to Berlin, Dekanozov, one of his closest henchmen, babbled to Ribbentrop: "Are you sure there isn't a mistake?"—while Molotov remarked to the German ambassador in Moscow: "Did we deserve this?" But then Stalin overcame his fear, and his Russians defeated the Germans. Such is the irony of history—or, rather, of human nature itself.

A main characteristic of Hitler's mind was hatred. True, he gained power in Germany partly because of his (temporary) alliance with German conservatives, people who, after the 1918–1919 revolutions, were still motivated by a fear of Communism. But he did not need these counterrevolutionaries for long, discarding them with ease—for he was no counterrevolutionary but a true revolutionary of the radical Right. He represented hate, hate for the "enemies" of German nationalism both within and without Germany, and he said so. It was a conscious, not an unconscious, element in his mind. As early as 1921 in one of his speeches, he announced: "There is only defiance and hate [Trotz und Hass], hate and again hate!" The lesson of life is "to hate and to be hard." This impressed Goebbels when he met Hitler in 1926. Hitler kept telling him how he, Hitler, "had learned to hate." "His most beautiful phrase," Goebbels wrote in his diary, "yesterday: 'God had graced our struggle abundantly, God's most beautiful gift bestowed on us the hate of our enemies, whom we in turn hate from the bottom of our hearts."

At the extremes of the political-ideological spectrum we may, then, observe two phenomena: the presence of fear among people of the radical Left, the presence of hatred among people of the radical Right. But such phenomena are not restricted to extremist believers in radical ideologies. There exist fellow-travelers on the Left but also on the Right: the latter people whose fears become transmuted in the pleasurable feeling that they are being admitted to the company of nationalist haters. I am not suggesting categories but tendencies. Nor are these inclinations simply attributable to the attractions of political ideologies. They are human characteristics and therefore complex ones: inclinations and potentialities that are neither fixed nor predetermined. They are not explainable by such definitions as "The Authoritarian Personality." For men and women do not *have* ideas. They *choose* them.

Dualities of human nature are evident in a myriad of human attributes, beyond and beneath the dual unity of spirit and matter. So, too, neither fear nor hatred ever exist in their "pure" forms. There is, almost always, a mixture of both. Khrushchev's fear in 1956 that the success of a Hungarian uprising would threaten the entire Soviet system of rule was allied with his hatred of those who, to his mind, were ready to profit from it. Hitler's many expressions of contemptuous hatred for his opponents existed together with other, less frequent, expressions that he nonetheless felt compelled to utter: "I, for one, have never had an inferiority complex!"—so, within the heart and mind of this hate-ridden, willful, and determined man we may detect at least an element of fear. Within the minds of persons who hate (and not only dislike) Jews or Arabs, or in the minds of others who hate Americans or capitalists, the element of fear is at least latent within their most rabid inclinations, evident in their exaggerated attribution of the potentially diabolical calculations and machinations of people whom they had chosen as their enemies.

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Beyond and beneath politics and ideologies, this condition is detectable in the relations of races. The latter do *not* consist of *constant* likes or dislikes. In those relationships, fear dominant over hatred may turn to hatred dominating fear: into hatred combined with contempt, issuing from an instinctive recognition that members of another race, or group, have now become afraid of *them.*

In the relationships of the sexes, these phenomena are startlingly obvious. Women can hate as much as men do; but somehow *active* hatred is more common among men than among women. At one extreme, fear may enervate; at another, hatred activates. A woman may respect, or even admire, a man who hates, but not a man who fears; a man seldom admires a woman who hates but he may respect a woman's fears. Hatred may lead to rape, while fear may lead to impotence. Both women and men have, on occasion, rape fantasies that may even titillate or fascinate them; but surely none have impotence fantasies that are titillating. There is a sad but inevitable element of the human condition: the attraction of evil in human hearts which is never purely physical but spiritual. That is the curse of the human condition: the ever present condition of original sin. But there is a saving grace. (It is distinctly *not* a "grace under pressure.") Because all of the foregoing does not suggest the inferiority of women—rather the contrary. It suggests—more, it is a mark of—their superiority, because of their natural inclination to the saving grace of love, not only latent in, but activated by their motherliness: for mothers, even more than fathers, love and protect those who fear.

In this respect the truth of Chesterton's aphorism must be instantly recognizable to anyone who knows something about the collective mass movements of the twentieth century. It is hate that unites people, whereas love is always individual, never collective. To this we may add what immediately negates whatever moral essence the purposes of class struggles or racism or modern mass nationalism may have: and that is that love is never the love of oneself; it is the love of *another.*

This is the saving grace of mankind. It is universal; yet it is the essence—or at least one of the principal essences of the Western, and of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Our civilization has now ceased to be a civilization with any pretenses of an extent of superiority over other civilizations, but its traditions are still unique—as far as we know. As far as we know: because I do not think that we are capable of comprehending the instinctive or inherited (and I do *not* mean merely biologically inherited) essences of hatred and fear among peoples whose traditions and whose psychic structures are very different from ours. It would be presumptuous to do so, since such a pretense of knowledge would amount to nothing more than a thoughtless projection of our thinking (and feeling) to the thinking and feeling of people about whom our knowledge is insufficient—a habit as common in racists as in social scientists. But I must, at the risk of presumption, say something about the Judeo-Christian tradition of love because of its relationship to the Western idea—and practice—of nobility, whose recognition (and practice) are disappearing now because of the decay and decline of the entire civilization of the Modern Age.

It has been often said that the God of the Old Testament was a jealous and angry God, whereas the Christ of the New Testament was the incarnation of love. There is truth in that, but it is also imprecise—and not only because of a moral reasoning. The presence of a loving, and forgiving, God exists in the Old Testament, too—while the example of the pharisees, condemners of Jesus, is a clear example of people whose fear has been transformed into hatred. On the other hand, there is the frequent curse among those who think they love Jesus (and take comfort in their "Christianity"): people to whom one, if not the most, attractive feature of Christ is His scourging of the Pharisees and the money changers in the Temple—incidentally, or not so incidentally, the *only* episode in His life marked by such severity.

Hatred may produce bravery, but not nobility. And our ideal of nobility contains an element that was only latent, and not clearly manifest, even among the greatest Greeks and Romans: the Christian element in nobility meaning the protection of those who are weak and who fear.

That this kind of nobility, while idealized, was also infrequent in the Middle Ages is evident. (We may now be turning—not returning—to a new Dark Ages, with its new develop-

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ing feudalisms, which is why an idealization of the Middle Ages—an attraction latent among "newly-born Christians" in many ways—is dangerous nonsense.) Appreciations of noble behavior existed then, of course, and not only in the veneration of certain saints. But a representation—more often a representation than a veritable incarnation—of it was one element in the civilization of the so-called Modern Age; and this was the ideal of the gentleman. With all consideration due to the inevitable limitations of the many telling, and often aphoristic, definitions of the "gentleman"—and with all consideration due, too, to those limitations of that ideal that inevitably connected it to "gentle" birth or class—we may add that one of the characteristics of the ideal gentleman was the respectable, or indeed admirable, combination of a character embodying little or no hatred together with little or no fear. That ideal—represented, of course not exclusively, by the English "gentleman"—spread across the world; it had much to do with the respect for England that contributed, often invisibly, to a historical and political condition, to the very prestige of the British Empire. But, together with other characteristics of the civilization of the Modern Age, this ideal, too, has now faded, thinned and melted away, also in England.

I have studied and read Tocqueville for nearly fifty years now, but it is only lately that I have recognized not only the essence but the meaning of the essence of his vision of history. Of course Tocqueville knew, and accepted, the prevalent division of our history into the Ancient, Middle, and Modern periods. But, beyond and beneath that, he saw history as composed by two enormous chapters: the aristocratic and the democratic age. That this view formed the method of all of his writings—ranging from *Democracy in America* to his unfinished masterwork on the history of the French Revolution and including the enormous scope and richness of his private correspondence—is evident. It is also evident that he did not entirely despair of democracy, for two reasons at least. One was the conviction of this deeply religious man (a mark of his character often insufficiently understood by his commentators) that this was a development that God ordained—why, he did not know, but there it was, and it was irreversible. The other was his belief that democracy may develop in two ways (and that it may differ from country to country, too): one moderate and materialist, bereft of the great virtues (and also vices) of aristocratic ages but because of the existence of religion, prudence, and moderation something not altogether regrettable; the other a degeneration into immorality and anarchy from which new brutal tyrannies may follow.

This is not the place to lament the, alas, rapidly multiplying evidences of the latter development. But I find it appropriate to add that the Tocquevillean view of the last five hundred years—with all of its faults, a Golden Age in the history of mankind, with its achievements in many ways surpassing those of Greece and Rome that men had idealized five hundred years ago and which had given the impetus to the Renaissance—was that of a mixture of aristocracy and democracy, with the former gradually weakening and the latter gradually, and inevitably, rising. The presence and the preservation of some of those formerly aristocratic virtues by newer people and classes were, to Tocqueville, essential ingredients for preventing the degeneration of democracy into the second type.

Still: *tertium non datur?* No: history is unpredictable; it is full of examples where two, clearly apparent, alternatives fade and are superseded by something else. So far as politics and power go, most democracies are now fearful enough to reject extremes and their proponents (often at the cost of considerable legerdemain, but that is not the point). Fear and hatred are prevalent among us, manifest and evident in the increasing savagery—that is the proper word, not "violence"—in and around our everyday lives. Fear and hatred are human characteristics and we shall never be able to eliminate them entirely. We must not only recognize their existence but their latent—and often more than latent—presence among those who wish to wield power. Whether some of them will actually be able to achieve power depends on many matters, most of them unpredictable, and seldom visible among the ever more complicated and manipulated appearances of politics and powers in this age of mass democracy. It may be the main test of democracy, well after the Hitlers and Stalins are gone, in the twenty-first century which, like most of the twentieth century, may be part of a transitional age.

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Alan Paton's Tragic Liberalism

CAROL IANNONE

In an essay written in 1975, Nadine Gordimer declared that South African literature in English had "made a new beginning with Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and indeed it could be said that Paton's novel put South Africa on the twentieth-century literary map. Within a few years of its publication in 1948, it had become a worldwide best-seller and was eventually translated into twenty languages. At the time of Paton's death in 1988, it had sold over fifteen million copies and was still selling at the rate of one hundred thousand copies a year. It is not solely in literary terms that a South African novel of the twentieth century must make its mark, however, and Gordimer went on to say that Paton's "was a book of lyrical beauty and power that moved the conscience of the outside world over racialism and, what's more, that of white South Africa as no book had done before."

A 1980 essay was still able to claim that "no single work of South African literature either before or since has attained such fame." Despite Gordimer's own rise to Nobel stature, and the coming to prominence of a number of South African authors, that assessment can be repeated today—no single work has achieved such fame. At the end of the century, it remains South Africa's most significant novel and a rare example of the successful wedding of literature and social conscience. As such it is a reflection of the life of its author.

At the time of the novel's publication, Alan Paton (pronounced with a long *a*) was a forty-five-year-old principal of a black reformatory school. He was born in 1903 in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, a colony of Great Britain until the South African union was formed in 1910, joining Natal and the other British colony, the Cape of Good Hope, with the two Afrikaner republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. His parents were associated with the fundamentalist Christadelphian sect, but in general Paton matured in the kind of Victorian-Edwardian-Anglican ambiance that seemed to define a lot of English South Africa at that time, a world of now old-fashioned virtues like "manliness, decency, honor," as Paton's biographer, Peter F. Alexander, names them.

Having skipped a few grades, Paton entered Natal University College at age sixteen and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree. There he met Railton Dent, an older student and the son of a missionary; Dent became the greatest individual influence on Paton's life by imparting to him "one thing," as Paton explains it, "that life must be used in the service of a cause greater than oneself." Paton goes on to elaborate: "This can be done by a Christian for two reasons: one is obedience to his Lord, the other is purely pragmatic, namely that one is going to miss the meaning of life if one doesn't." It proved for Paton to be the prescription for a long and industrious life, full of service, courage, and accomplishment.

If reading the life of the average twentieth-century literary figure can make us glad we are not like its subject, reading about Paton's can make us wish we were. Christianity was central to Paton's life from first to last. He left the Christadelphians to become a Methodist, and then in 1930 he became an Anglican, joining the church of his wife, Dorrie, whom he married in 1928 and with whom he had two sons. He was eventually to become a lay leader and to participate in the church's repudiation of racialism and separatism.

After graduation from college, Paton

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taught white children for some years and became increasingly active in Christian benevolent organizations. In 1934 he fell deathly ill with enteric fever, lost over a third of his body weight, and was confined to a hospital and convalescent home for six months. When he recovered, a friend told him that after such an experience he would not be able to resume his old work, and this proved to be true. Under the direction of Jan Hofmeyr, one of South Africa's liberal Afrikaner statesmen, the Department of Education was undertaking the transformation of both black and white reformatories from virtual prisons to something closer to schools.

Paton was put in charge of Diepkloof, near Johannesburg in the Transvaal, where he was responsible, at different times, for from 360 to more than 600 black pupils, officially aged nine to twenty-one and called "boys" at both the white and black institutions. They had been committed for offenses ranging from pilfering fruit from street stalls to rape and murder. Here he worked veritable miracles of humanization, with the help of an enlightened supervisor at the ministry, several sympathetic outside government overseers, and an excellent staff whom he largely trained himself.

Paton had always shown a literary bent and had been writing poetry and attempting novels since his college days, but the pressures of work and family prevented him from bringing any mature work to fruition. After twelve years at Diepkloof, this was to change. In 1946, he embarked on an extended journey to review correctional institutions in Europe, the United States, and Canada. One September at twilight, he found himself sitting in Norway's Trondheim cathedral, admiring its beautiful rose window and longing for home. He went back to his hotel and began writing, completing in three months as he continued his trip the novel that was to become *Cry, the Beloved Country*. He gave the manuscript to the friends whom he was visiting in the United States; they were much and tearfully taken with it, suggested changes, and found a publisher, Scribner's, where Maxwell Perkins, the editor for Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe, advised acceptance. In appreciation for their efforts Paton granted his friends a generous percentage of what were to be the novel's considerable profits thereafter, and Scribner's went on to be the American publisher of the rest of Paton's twenty or so books, including two more novels, *Too Late the Phalarope* and *Ah, But Your Land Is Beautiful*, a book of short stories, a play, two volumes of autobiography, two biographies, some devotional literature, and several collections of essays, poems, stories, and political writings, much of it interesting and even important, but none quite the equal of his exquisite first novel.

In later years, Paton often observed that South Africa had very little to unite it—what with myriad African tribes, a population of Indians and "coloreds," and two different white "races," all with separate languages, cultures, histories, values, and symbols. South Africa's union had been brought about by war and politics more than by shared ideals. Only the physical land itself might inspire common loyalty. As Maxwell Perkins observed, the land is one of the chief characters in *Cry, the Beloved Country*. The novel opens with a lyrical description of the spectacular landscape of the Ixopo district in Natal:

> There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them, to Carisbrooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa. About you there is grass and bracken and you may hear the forlorn crying of the titihoya, one of the birds of the veld. Below you is the valley of the Umzimkulu, on its journey from the Drakensberg to the sea; and beyond and behind the river, great hill after great hill; and beyond and behind them, the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand.
>
> The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. It holds the rain and the mist, and they seep into the ground, feeding the streams in every kloof. It is well-tended, and not too many cattle feed upon it; not too many fires burn it, laying bare the soil. Stand unshod upon it, for the ground is holy, being even as it came from the Creator.

The narrative then shifts to a very different terrain, one that reflects the division in the society itself:

> Where you stand the grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. But the rich green hills break down. They fall to the valley below, and falling, change their nature. For they grow red and bare; they cannot hold the rain and mist, and the streams are dry in the kloofs. Too many cattle feed upon the grass, and too many fires have burned it. Stand shod upon

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it, for it is coarse and sharp, and the stones cut under the feet. It is not kept, or guarded, or cared for, it no longer keeps men, guards men, cares for men. The titihoya does not cry here any more.

The great red hills stand desolate, and the earth has torn away like flesh. The lightning flashes over them, the clouds pour down upon them, the dead streams come to life, full of the red blood of the earth. Down in the valleys women scratch the soil that is left, and the maize hardly reaches the height of a man. They are valleys of old men and old women, of mothers and children. The men are away, the young men and the girls are away. The soil cannot keep them any more.

This poorer district is named Ndotsheni by the author. The action begins when the main character, Stephen Kumalo, a devout Zulu parson of an impoverished rural Anglican parish, receives a letter from a stranger summoning him to Johannesburg. According to the letter, Kumalo's much younger sister Gertrude is in need. Gertrude went to the big city with her small son some time before to find her husband who had gone to work in the gold mines. Kumalo's son Absalom is also in the city; he went to look for Gertrude and has lost touch with his old parents. Once Kumalo arrives in Johannesburg, he is helped by a group of Anglican priests, both black and white, who minister in a black slum called Sophiatown.

Kumalo finds his family drastically changed. His brother John, who moved to the city some years before, is living with a woman not his wife and has become a racial militant, full of the germinating anger of the de-tribalized, de-Christianized, urbanized South Africa that Paton saw waiting in the wings. Moreover, Kumalo learns with sorrow that his sister Gertrude has sunk into prostitution and that, during the very course of Kumalo's desperate search for him, Absalom has committed murder while breaking into a house with two companions.

Meanwhile, James Jarvis, a wealthy English-speaking farmer from the fertile area described in the opening passages, has learned that his grown son Arthur has been shot to death in his home in Johannesburg. The elder Jarvis and his wife must also journey to the city for the funeral and trial. There he learns from the police what has since brought Stephen Kumalo almost to the breaking point, that Absalom Kumalo is the killer of his son. Thus the two worlds collide.

A later critic faulted Paton for not giving Absalom's point of view, but the novel works from the standpoint of the older generation. As the two fathers struggle to understand what has become of their sons, the anguish of the beloved country unfolds. "When people go to Johannesburg they don't come back," murmurs Kumalo's wife, Grace. Absalom fell in with "bad companions," one of them his own cousin Matthew, John's son, but Kumalo remains aghast at how his well brought up boy could have committed so terrible a deed. For his part, Jarvis too will learn more about a side of his son that he barely knew. Arthur had been president of the African Boys Club and a proponent of racial reform, so his death at the hands of a young native seems ironic. Among Arthur's effects Jarvis finds manuscripts and articles through which he learns, painfully and in detail, about his son's strongly held racial views. At the funeral, which is attended by all shades and colors of people, Jarvis finds himself shaking black hands for the first time in his life.

The novel's success may have been due, in part, to the moment of South African history that it captured, 1946, before the imposition of "grand apartheid" was to consume the country completely in politics. The depression and war had passed. Industrialization and urbanization were breaking down tribal customs, even as the increasing population of blacks and whites in the cities was worsening the tensions under separatism. The novel strips away the surface assurances of white supremacy to reveal what has in some respects become a wasteland—a literal wasteland in the case of the sordid slums and the dying tribal lands, but also a spiritual wasteland, characterized by alienation and mistrust among races and peoples and families and generations. "It is fear that rules this land," says Msimangu, one of the black priests who helps Kumalo.

So painful is the reality depicted in *Cry, the Beloved Country* that when the playwright Maxwell Anderson adapted the novel for the stage (with music by Kurt Weill), he called it *Lost in the Stars*, and made it a cry against a God who had abandoned his creatures. This was done much to Paton's consternation. His perspective is thoroughly Christian, though in the sense of a struggle for the light, not in the application of received truths. The novel

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manifests both Christian and tragic qualities. The final answers are "secrets" and "mysteries" that reside only with God, and at any given moment the divine may not be evident or clear. The characters must bear up in the face of desolation, injustice, pain, and loss, but there is also hope, comfort, and consolation.

Thus despite the good liberal intentions behind the novel to move white South Africans over conditions in their society, *Cry, the Beloved Country* does not evidence the kind of superficiality that Lionel Trilling felt was typical of what he called "the liberal imagination." Avoiding easy answers, Paton enters into the perspective of both "victims" and "oppressors," and demonstrates a humility and acceptance before the unknown and unresolvable.

Both the 1995 film version (starring James Earl Jones) and the Anderson play evince the thinner imaginative capacity of much contemporary liberalism and thus provide an instructive contrast to Paton's greater subtlety. In the film, worthy on many other counts, the delicacy that Paton achieved in portraying Jarvis's racialism is partly destroyed by the drive toward ideological simplification. In the film, James Jarvis refers to blacks as kaffirs, an insulting word that is out of character for the Jarvis of the novel. Even more untrue to Paton's vision, the Jarvis in the film refuses to shake the black hand that is proffered to him at his son's funeral. In an even greater departure from Paton, the Jarvis figure in the Maxwell Anderson adaptation is an out-and-out white supremacist spouting forth on the necessity for the white man to dominate the black. But Paton knew that South Africa's problem lay as much in the softer, unarticulated sort of racialism as in the ideological kind.

The 1951 film, directed by Zoltan Korda and written by Paton, with Sidney Poitier as Msimangu, is faithful to Paton's nuanced tragic vision. Although it might be too low-key for some tastes and was not commercially successful ("When does your film start?" asked Alexander Korda, Zoltan's brother, at an early screening), it is deeply moving, especially for those who know the novel.

Paton's rejection of easy racial moralism does not mean that he exonerates the South African system. Far from it. But he doesn't go in for the blanket indictment of South Africa that became typical in later years. Msimangu castigates the white man for giving "too little . . . almost nothing" to the blacks, but he also acknowledges the gift of Christianity and appreciates the good white people who do what they can. On the other side, the fiery speech of John Kumalo demanding higher wages makes a lot of sense, notwithstanding the menacing anger that informs it.

In one of Arthur's writings, a work in progress discovered by his father after his death, Paton provides a lengthy version of his own thought, though skillfully tailored to reflect Arthur's younger, more naïve understanding. Arthur carefully distinguishes what was "permissible" from what was "not permissible" in South Africa's history. Reflecting an earlier understanding of colonialism, he does not feel it necessary to delegitimize all of white South Africa:

> What we did when we came to South Africa was permissible. It was permissible to develop the great resources with the aid of what labour we could find. It was permissible to use unskilled men for unskilled work. But it is not permissible to keep men unskilled for the sake of unskilled work.
>
> It was permissible when we discovered gold to bring labour to the mines. It was permissible to build compounds and to keep women and children away from the towns. It was permissible as an experiment, in the light of what we knew. But in the light of what we know now, with certain exceptions, it is no longer permissible. It is not permissible for us to go on destroying family life when we know that we are destroying it.

This aspect of the novel has perhaps not been fully appreciated. Paton had a tragic grasp of the way good and evil are interwoven in human history. In Arthur Jarvis he created a character who understood the inevitability of civilizational progress and expansion and the conflict and loss that they bring. At the same time, Arthur insists that the colonizers take responsibility for the damage they have done in the process:

> The old tribal system was, for all its violence and savagery, for all its superstition and witchcraft, a moral system. Our natives today produce criminals and prostitutes and drunkards, not because it is their nature to do so, but because their simple system of order and tradition and convention has been destroyed. It was destroyed by the impact of our own civilization. Our civilization has therefore an inescapable duty to set up another system of order and tradition and convention.

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Knowing that South Africa prides itself on being a Christian nation, Arthur reproaches it for its hypocrisy, and, by the by, renders a shrewd analysis of the psychology of racism:

> The truth is that our Christian civilization is riddled through and through with dilemma. We believe in the brotherhood of man, but we do not want it in South Africa. We believe that God endows men with diverse gifts, and that human life depends for its fullness on their employment and enjoyment, but we are afraid to explore this belief too deeply. . . . We say we withhold education because the black child has not the intelligence to profit by it; we withhold opportunity because black people have no gifts. . . . We shift our ground again when a black man does achieve something remarkable, and feel deep pity for a man who is condemned to the loneliness of being remarkable, and decide that it is a Christian kindness not to let black men become remarkable. Thus even our God becomes a confused and inconsistent creature, giving gifts and denying them employment. . . . The truth is that our civilization is not Christian; it is a tragic compound of great ideal and fearful practice, of high assurance and desperate anxiety, of loving charity and fearful clutching of possessions.

These are nearly the last words that Arthur wrote before his murder.

As bad as social conditions are for blacks, however, they do not entirely explain the senseless murder of a son, husband, and father, and a man "devoted to our people." There were those who had tried to help Absalom. He had spent time in a Diepkloof-like reformatory, where a young official obtained a job for him and arranged for his release so that he might assume responsibility for the girl he had made pregnant. But such aid could not overcome the temptations and confusions Absalom faced in the big city.

At the trial, the judge acknowledges and perhaps even partly concedes the arguments by Absalom's lawyer regarding the "disastrous effect" of tribal breakdown that the victim Arthur Jarvis himself wrote about. But, the judge asserts, "even if it be true that we have, out of fear and selfishness and thoughtlessness, wrought a destruction that we have done little to repair . . . a Judge may not trifle with the Law because the society is defective. . . . Under the law a man is held responsible for his deeds."

Under South African law, a conviction of murder requires that "an intention to kill" be established. Absalom's lawyer argues that the young man did not mean to kill but only fired his gun out of fear. The judge finds an intention by "inference" in Absalom's carrying a loaded gun while breaking into a home. In ruling so, the judge is applying a standard of legal responsibility and conscious deliberation where conditions of social disorder and disadvantage have eroded the moral sense of many young people. "It is as my father says," Absalom dutifully responds to Kumalo's prodding, but he cannot himself explain his own actions. And exactly why Absalom did what he did remains one of the "mysteries" to which there will be no answer.

Nevertheless, Absalom confesses, marries his girl to give the baby a name, and bears up under his fate. His two accomplices, egged on by the militant John, simply deny their involvement. They are completely exonerated owing to what the judge and his assessors deem insufficient proof, while Absalom is condemned to death. Some have taken Paton to be criticizing South African justice, so particular within the courtroom and so negligent without, but the author's accomplishment is that the reader can both understand the reasoning behind the guilty verdict and yet wince at the pronouncement of the sentence.

Ultimately, the humility, honesty, and persevering hope of Kumalo and his friends prove more fruitful than the corrosive anger and cynicism of John and the two thieves (who are involved in other criminal exploits). Good emerges from the wreck of the tragedy. Jarvis and Kumalo meet in a deeply moving but understated scene of shared and interlocking grief. Where Jarvis once saw only "a dirty old parson" from a "dirty old wood-and-iron church," he now sees a human being in anguish as great as his own. Jarvis's eyes open to his son's concerns for the blacks and he begins to help them where he can. He contributes to the boys' club, arranges for an agricultural consultant to help restore the ravaged earth of Ndotsheni, and determines to build a new church for Kumalo. For his part, Kumalo returns home with an expanded family, consisting of Gertrude's little son (Gertrude has mysteriously disappeared back into the big city) and his pregnant daughter-in-law. He also becomes more active, working with the agricultural consultant and encouraging the local chief to serve his people rather than in-

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dulge his arbitrary and trivial power over them.

The beauty of the language is part of the magic of *Cry, the Beloved Country*: the poetic Zulu speech, the cadences of the King James Bible, the mythic quality of much of the prose. Paton threads through sounds and images that make the story come alive: the gold of the mines that cause the devastation of the slums and the golden words of Msimangu's sermon that restore Kumalo's heart; the raucous, irresponsible laughter in the black townships; the cacophony of white voices addressing the "native problem" (vaguely reminiscent of the empty discourse in the pub in *The Waste Land*); the rush of the river when torrential rain stops. And the description of Kumalo's vigil the night before his son's execution is sublime.

After initial widespread adulation, critics began to find fault with *Cry, the Beloved Country*, seeing it as sentimental and propagandistic, more a treatise than a work of art. The novel tends to survive these objections, however, because the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Wherever one probes a weak spot, the novel resists at some other point; as Lewis Gannett put it, it is "both unabashedly innocent and subtly sophisticated." The mythic narrative involving the search for the lost son blends with a realistic picture of a modern society. The novel's earnest idealism is offset by the amorphous sense of fear that pervades the country and by the suppressed fury the characters carry within them. Kumalo and Msimangu can erupt in anger and yield to subtle cruelty, and the brows of the young official at Diepkloof are constantly knitted against the difficulty of his work. (Paton's own increasingly tight-lipped expression was his response to the frustrations he faced.)

Where *Cry, the Beloved Country* grows too fable-like, it suddenly turns analytical; where too discursive, it waxes poetical. Edward Callan, Paton's chief critic, has done a thorough job of delineating Paton's techniques, but, at the same time, it is not necessary to overstate the novel's purely literary pretensions in order to appreciate its achievement. Dan Jacobson, the self-exiled South African novelist, put *Cry, the Beloved Country* above strictly literary, political, or moral considerations into a category of works he called "*proverbial*."

Behind much of the criticism of Paton's novel one can make out a political edge. Early objectors to the novel tended to be white South Africans who bridled at its grim portrayal of black life. When the first film version was shown, the wife of the nationalist Afrikaner politician D. F. Malan remarked, "Surely, Mr. Paton, you don't really think things are like that?" The novel was not permitted in the schools until a few years before Paton's death. Later objections came from black militants and their sympathizers, who saw the novel as an expression of white liberalism and mocked Paton's belief in boys' clubs, for example. But the author was not so shallow as to imagine that boys' clubs per se were the ultimate solution to South Africa's dilemma. Paton makes clear in the novel that the renewed ameliorative efforts in the aftermath of the tragedy are a good beginning: but "when that dawn will come, of our emancipation, from the fear of bondage and the bondage of fear, why, that is a secret."

Nevertheless, Paton was modest enough to appreciate the good such measures could do. Paton personally paid for the education of countless black youngsters, gave financial help to many others who were in need, and contributed enormous amounts of time and money to his church, to charitable organizations, and to institutes working for social improvement. These commitments expressed his larger conviction that, as he said elsewhere, "the only power which can resist the power of fear is the power of love"—that the only way to achieve justice in South Africa was through a change in the hearts of enough people to make a difference. The militants who faulted Paton for proposing "love" as a solution to social and political injustice did not seem to realize how much of the groundwork for their political activism had been prepared through voluntary organizations of the kind Paton labored in and supported.

So, too, with the novel itself. Noting the blows it took from later militants, the black South African novelist Richard Rive defended *Cry, the Beloved Country*, calling it a "watershed" in South African fiction in that it brought the racial question into literary purview and widely influenced later writers. The Angolan writer Sousa Jamba read the novel at age fifteen in a second-hand copy that smelled of kerosene because, he surmised, its previous owners had stayed up nights to read it. Jamba carried it with him everywhere, and "forgot

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that what I was reading was written by a white man."

Even disdainful black writers such as the South African poet Dennis Brutus had to admit the novel's power and influence. And while deploring much in the characterizations, Ezekiel Mphahlele, another South African writer, concedes that *Cry, the Beloved Country* is "the first work in the history of South African fiction in which the black man looms so large." Although he did not like the portrait of the humble Zulu priest (preferring the angry John Kumalo instead), Mphahlele implicitly admits that it was true to life.

In Stephen Kumalo, Paton has painted a full picture of an African man, a good but flawed human being, complete with an inner life and a moral compass. The judge's sophisticated legal reasoning in no way surpasses the rural parson's own horrified grasp of his son's murderous act. Furthermore, Paton portrays his black characters in the dignity of individual responsibility even as he shows the restricted circumstances in which they must maneuver.

Paton's preoccupation with individual responsibility must partly have been derived from his experience at the Diepkloof Reformatory, where he stressed education, introduced extensive vocational training, and made many improvements in diet, clothing, sanitation, and living conditions. He became famous for successfully putting into practice the theories of experts in juvenile delinquency who believed that freedom could be used as an instrument of reform and rehabilitation. Paton canceled many of the harsh and restrictive rules that had been in operation before his tenure, and the results were gratifying. The rate of escapes plunged sharply. After a rocky start, his furlough and home-leave program was an astonishing success. Thousands and thousands of boys took their respective leaves and returned with no trouble; very few absconded. Alas, one furloughed boy did commit a serious crime, breaking into a white woman's home and murdering her. He became the basis for the character Absalom Kumalo.

In some ways what Paton achieved at Diepkloof was the fulfillment of a liberal dream, epitomized when he had the high barbed wire gates of the compound torn down and replaced with . . . flower beds! The freer the boys were, the less subject to punitive rules, the better they behaved, and the less likely they were to escape. But this behavior was not achieved through the simpleminded "compassion" in currency today. It developed within a framework of authority through which Paton labored to develop his charges' capacity for internal control. He employed military-style discipline in the work details and had the boys march and drill in parades conducted by his capable Afrikaner assistants, who were themselves in a civilian wing of the military service during the depression and war. Surprisingly or unsurprisingly, depending on one's point of view, these parades were relished by the boys, who took great pride in them.

Paton instituted daily Bible lessons and encouraged evening hymn singing, often conducted by his one black assistant or by Paton himself. He gradually built up his pupils' self-discipline by exposing them to the temptations they would face on the outside, and he granted them more and more freedom as they showed themselves more and more capable of handling it. He kept careful files on all of them and exercised great care in choosing them for furloughs. Furthermore, he sealed their behavior through pledges of responsibility. In solemn ceremonies, the boys made promises of trust and Paton issued badges of honor. Two boys who absconded while on separate furloughs eventually turned themselves in to the local police; when asked by the police why they had turned themselves in, both replied that it was because of their "promise."

The point is that while Paton did believe that the "root causes" of black crime lay in conditions in South Africa, for which whites were largely responsible, he also knew what painstaking care, what investment of self, and what demands on the individual black person were involved in undoing the effects of these causes. He knew that even his best efforts did not always succeed; with all the good he was able to accomplish at Diepkloof, he was never able to eliminate corporal punishment entirely. All this gave him a kind of clear-eyed wisdom that served him well in his activities after 1948.

To the surprise and consternation of many, the 1948 elections saw the defeat of the relatively liberal United Party under the great Boer War general and statesman Jan Smuts

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and with him his liberal ministers, in favor of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party under D. F. Malan. The Nationalist victory, combined with the success of his novel, convinced Paton to leave Diepkloof, where the new regime would eventually undo all his work. He tried for a while the life of a man of letters. But the worsening political situation in the country and his commitment to service, as well as his relative lack of literary inspiration following his first success, led him to politics.

Like Arthur Jarvis, Paton never condemned the Afrikaner people as such, only the extremes of Afrikaner nationalism. Although he had been painfully disappointed by the arrogance and exclusivity he saw at the time of the Centenary of the Great Trek in 1938 (for which he grew a commemorative beard), he admired what was good in Afrikanerdom and, unlike most English-speaking South Africans, he knew Afrikaans. He appreciated the Afrikaners' position, their humiliation under the British, and their peculiar vulnerability as an isolated minority culture, even with their numerical superiority over the English. And Paton was always able to see the individual behind the ideology; he recalls in his autobiography that the only person ever to return the salute of the head boy who kept the gate at Diepkloof was an Afrikaner nationalist.

Such Afrikaner statesmen as Smuts and Hofmeyr, Anglophiles with a larger perspective on South Africa's future, gave some hope that racial conditions in the country might improve. But now a new phase of Afrikanerdom was beginning under Malan and his minister of native affairs, Hendrik Verwoerd, who was to become prime minister in 1958: apartheid, grand apartheid, total apartheid, "separate development," constituted a social engineering project of dreadful hubristic proportions, aiming to separate all of the races and tribes in every area of life, ostensibly in order to preserve their God-given identities, languages, and cultures, but really to retain white supremacy and Afrikaner security. These were the years when, as Paton wrote, "one draconian law after another was passed," backed up by terror and force.

Paton was dismayed not only at the fresh and monstrous injustice that the new policy inflicted on blacks, but at its demented unrealizability. Much mixing had already taken place, industrialization had produced a great deal of interdependence among groups in the labor force, and great numbers of blacks had no real tribal affiliation and spoke only Afrikaans. Paton thought that Verwoerd, in his obsession to create security for the Afrikaners, had constructed something contrary to nature—not to mention nature's God.

In 1953 Paton helped found the Liberal Party to uphold the hope of a non-racial South Africa, and he wrote and spoke extensively on behalf of its principles, both at home and abroad, even after the Party itself was proscribed in 1968. (All reports portray him as an electrifyingly gifted orator.) The Liberal Party was against violence and staunchly anti-Communist, and its classical rights-based premises differed from the socialist Freedom Charter of the African National Congress. During these years Paton lost his wife to emphysema, endured a miserable period of widowerhood, and, fortunately, married his second wife, Anne, in 1969.

Paton's politics can make us wonder how "wishy washy liberal" ever became a common epithet. His liberalism was a matter of strength and courage all the way through. He discarded his early and rather casually accepted racialism as he came to see, in the face of the majority white view, that white supremacy was at odds with Christian theology (and was driving South Africa toward disaster). Later, he maintained his moderation against the growing radicalism around him—again, at least partly because of his religious understanding.

As Paton's biographer Peter F. Alexander points out, the whole metaphor of Paton's two-part autobiography, *Towards the Mountain* and *Journey Continued*, suggests that Christian perfection is not something to be had in this world, but only to be worked toward. Paton was an idealist, but not a political utopian. He was aware of the built-in limitations in South African society and was patient with incremental change. For this reason he was to fall into disfavor as the racial activism in his country became more fierce, but he stood fast against enormous pressure, mockery, and contempt. The attacks were not only on him but on liberalism itself and came from blacks and whites, including many former allies. On speaking tours in the United States, he encountered the vociferous anti-apartheid opposition on American campuses that branded him a paternalistic relic.

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Paton angered the radicals in three areas, writes Alexander. One, he opposed trade sanctions in the 1980s because he felt that they would hurt the black poor most of all. To this we can add another reason: his experience at Diepkloof, which had taught him that punishment did not lead to true reform; he continued to believe in the need for moral suasion to lead people to free and enlightened choice. He also continued to hold out against violence, although he testified for mercy in the sentencing of Nelson Mandela. Two, he gradually came to favor federalism instead of a unitary state, at least as a transition to one man one vote for South Africa. And, three, he admired Chief Buthelezi, a fellow Christian but, for the militants, a thorn in the side.

Paton took plenty of heat from the government during these years. Although, as the author of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, he was spared arrest and banning, his passport was temporarily revoked, his mail opened, his phones tapped, his house searched, and his property damaged. At certain times he was watched and followed; he received ugly threats and letters from white racists. But his quarrels with the militant left are perhaps of greater interest today.

Paton demanded to know where the "young white Radicals who sneer at liberals and liberalism" would have been without previous liberal efforts. They "would have been in darkness until now," he asserted. "One cannot measure past labour in terms of present demands." He went on to caution that "if black power meets white power in headlong confrontation, and there are no black liberals around, then God help South Africa. Liberalism is more than politics. It is humanity, tolerance, and love of justice. South Africa has no future without them." Paton's fictional character, Msimangu, says something similar, though more lyrically, in one of the novel's most memorable lines: "I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they turn to loving they will find we are turned to hating."

Paton often compared the South African situation with the American. He admired the United States as an example of democracy to the world and wrote that American citizens "should go down on their knees and thank God for their Constitution, their Bill of Rights, and their Supreme Court," since, he felt, these had prevented the United States's racial problem from exploding like South Africa's and resulting in cycles of all-out oppression and violence. He was also canny enough to recognize the difference in demographics. To righteous white outsiders who demanded "moral solutions to political problems" he dryly remarked that it was easier to be good when you are secure—that is, when you are the majority.

Paton's tendency to compare the United States and South Africa invites several observations today. In some ways, the two countries are the positive and negative of each other. Aside from an almost exact reversal in racial demographics, South Africa, according to Diana Wylie, an American academic writing in the *Yales Review* of her recent visit to South Africa, is without common narratives or unifying myths or founding principles to unite its disparate peoples and is struggling to reach for them now. We have such common narratives and principles and are doing our best to delegitimize them. The idea of preserving different groups in separate enclaves was one of the delusions of Afrikaner nationalism, and tribalism and ethnicity persist as problems in the new South African state, while here we disfavor the old assimilative American model and energetically promote ethnicity and separatism under the rubric of "multiculturalism." If South Africa watched tribal breakdown and did nothing to remedy its effects, we watch family breakdown and do nothing. Finally, Wylie notes that Christianity has and continues to be a unifying force in South Africa. In contrast, our rights enthusiasts labor to strip religion from the public square.

Although Paton's political labors and political writing pretty much overshadowed his literary work after *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and his two later novels show the strain of politics, he did manage to produce a few fine stories and an important biography of Hofmeyr. But it was his supreme and lasting achievement to uphold a model of humanity in the face of suffering and injustice and to have limned it in an extraordinary and enduring novel.

Paton harkens us back to the moral discipline of the early civil rights struggle in our own country, and he stands for something lost in our post-civil rights era of radicalized demands, grievances, and entitlements: the tragic sense, the mature recognition that "suffering is an inescapable part of life" and that human character is formed in response to it. He held

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to the belief that love is greater than hate, and that persuasion and reason are better than force and intimidation. He never lost the to us now perhaps distant conviction that "a man who fights for justice must himself be cleansed and purified." He resisted the simplified ideologies of both Left and Right. His liberalism was not the narcissism of good intentions, but the lifelong commitment of a man who saw reality whole.

Cry, the Beloved Country claims our attention through its unembarrassed simplicity, its nuanced complexity, and its textured beauty, as well as through the qualities of mind of an earlier age that it manifests, a turn-of-the-century belief in the dignity of the individual, a modest acceptance of the limits of the human condition, and an affirmation in the power of reason, faith, and goodness. As such it commends itself to the turn-of-another-century's end.

First Words

JOAN I. SIEGEL

The way the words push through your lips
sometimes makes me think of the birth of a foal
who squeezes through the dark
a little misshapen and folded
trying to stand on wobbly legs and shake
himself open.

Sometimes you make me think
of a fish feeding on water as you suck in a breath
and out come words like bubbles floating up to the air.

Sometimes you make me think of a glassblower
with his puffy cheeks and eyes squeezed almost shut
intent on the shape turning in the flame.

Sometimes you make me think of a magician
pulling a dove from his sleeve the way you say
bird and it seems to unfold its wings at your mouth
and fly up to a branch on the apple tree.

✪ JOAN I. SIEGEL's poems have appeared in *Commonweal*, the *Tennessee Quarterly*, the *Cimmaron Review*, and other magazines.

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James Joyce's Comic Messiah

ROBERT ALTER

The reasons that drew Joyce to cast his modern Everyman in the mold of the classical Ulysses have been broadly evident to readers since the first publication of the novel. Of all the epic heroes of antiquity, Ulysses is the one who most fully engages the alluring multiplicity of human experience ("many sided" is one of his Homeric epithets), moving from seductress to sorceress to monster to welcoming princess, flung from proud commander to naked shipwreck survivor, then springing from disguised beggar to triumphant king. The exigencies of the quotidian, piquantly entrammeled with the fabulous, are more palpable in his story than in any of the other classical epics, and domesticity is the inner sanctum of the political realm itself—that conjugal bed built round a living olive tree that the returning hero will reclaim at the end.

And for all the traditional martial prowess of the epic warrior that Odysseus exhibits in savaging Penelope's suitors, he makes his arduous way across the Mediterranean to Ithaca chiefly through wiliness, ingenuity, resilience, and toughness of spirit. In all this, one readily sees the delightful correspondences—only some of them ironic—between the Homeric hero and Joyce's middling modern man, frustrated in marriage, work, and parenthood; cuckolded, yet longing to reclaim his Penelope (who, even while reveling in the afternoon's infidelity, proves to be faithful to Bloom in her fashion); an Eccles-Street homebody but also a voyager of sorts in the fabulous streets of Dublin, and, still more, a habitual mental voyager to exotic bournes where dulcimers play and melon-ripe maidens beckon.

What complicates Joyce's version of Ulysses and, I think, produces a shift in the thematic implications and tonalities of the figure as he represents him, is that he grafts onto the Homeric hero a cluster of allusions to that other set of Mediterranean texts that has been foundational for the Western tradition—the Hebrew Bible. This crossbreeding of intertextuality in part reflects Joyce's delight in playing inventively with received ideas, and I think it is never easy to distinguish in his writing between sheer literary play, self-pleasuring ingenuity, and the kind of invocation of archetypes that gives real resonance to his characters, though in my reading of Bloom the resonance is what mainly comes across. Hebraism and Hellenism are, of course, in different formulations a familiar schematic division of Western culture (Matthew Arnold duly makes a cameo appearance in the face of a deaf gardener near the beginning of the first chapter), and it is Joyce's clear aim both to exploit this opposition—in "Ithaca" Stephen is elaborately aligned with Hellenism and Bloom with Hebraism—and to collapse it.

Thus Joyce makes his version of the Greek epic hero a Jew, or, strictly speaking, a vestigial and ambivalent Jew, who, we learn at one point, is not even circumcised. "Jewgreek and Greekjew meet" not only in the encounter between Bloom and Stephen but within the character of Bloom himself. Joyce's most obvious move in collapsing a distinction as old as the Pauline Epistles is to wed the heroic wanderer of Homer's epic with the wandering Jew of post-biblical Christian lore: the brilliant

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epic survivor in this way is fused with the outcast, the marginal man, the perennial object of persecution and reproach. Less transparent, perhaps because at first it seems it could be only ironic, is the association of Bloom with the biblical idea of redemption.

Allusions to the Bible abound in *Ulysses*, being nearly as frequent as allusions to the Odyssey. There are, of course, certain recurrent references to the New Testament, since Bloom as Messiah is at a number of points linked with Christ, but the invocation of Hebrew Scripture is considerably more prominent, with a special concentration on the Exodus story (a tale of national redemption, Bloom lined up with Moses), on the figure of Elijah (who, according to Malachi, is to be harbinger of the Messiah), and on Isaiah and some of the other prophets who articulated visions of redemption. Tracing such networks of allusion is a standard operation of the Joyce industry—no other major modern writer has created so many irresistible temptations for the scholar's impulse of pedantry—but more noteworthy is Joyce's extraordinary sense of realistic rightness in introducing the biblical materials mimetically into Bloom's world as elements of consciousness, confused shards and fragments, notions misperceived yet perennially relevant, the flotsam and jetsam of an ancient past that plausibly, and often comically, surfaces in the present. In this respect, the biblical allusions often work differently than do the Homeric ones, which by and large do not reflect the consciousness of the characters but rather are ingeniously superimposed on the narrative by the novelist.

Here, for example, is Bloom walking through the office of the *Freeman's Journal*, in the subsection headlined AND IT WAS THE FEAST OF PASSOVER. Ever curious, he watches the compositor setting the type for Paddy Dignam's obituary, reading the letters backward ("mangiD. kcirtaP."). This odd feat of reading from right to left, against the grain, as it were, of prevailing cultural practice, makes Bloom think of his father, reading the Hebrew text of the Hagadah, the narrative of the Exodus recited at the seder on Passover night (this fascination with the idea of reading from right to left will recur at the end of "Nightown"):

> Poor Papa with his hagadah book, reading backwards with his finger to me. Pessach. Next year in Jerusalem. Dear, O dear! All that long business about that brought us out of the land of Egypt and into the house of bondage *alleluia. Shema Israel Adonai Elohenu.* No, that's the other. Then the twelve brothers, Jacob's sons. And then the lamb and the cat and the dog and the stick and the water and the butcher and then the angel of death kills the butcher and he kills the ox and the dog kills the cat. Sounds a bit silly till you come to look into it well. Justice it means but it's everybody eating everyone else. That's what life is after all.

Bloom's confusion and bemusement over these half-remembered pieces of Hebrew tradition are realistically precise for the kind of Jew he is, and they are both funny and touching. Since the Passover, or Pessach, service is a recitation of the first national redemption of Israel, it appropriately concludes with the declaration of messianic hope, "Next year in Jerusalem," which Bloom properly recalls. Then his earnest but imperfect memory begins a characteristic skid. The biblical phrase, used in the Hagadah, "that brought us out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" is scrambled to read "into the house of bondage," so the announced redemption is short-circuited, Israel turning back from Egypt into bondage. The *alleluia* is then sheer free association with biblical phrases—or, perhaps, a subliminal recollection of Psalm 113, which appears in a sequence of hallelujah psalms, and is later quoted from in the Vulgate version in "Ithaca." Through *alleluia* Bloom stumbles on to *Shema Israel*, "Hear O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one," but breaks off, realizing, "that's the other"—that is, the declaration of faith which would be the one other scrap of Hebrew beside some phrases from the Hagadah that a Jew of his ilk might still retain.

The irrelevant recollection of Jacob's twelve sons is another effort of Bloom's to find the thread he has lost among these bits of tradition he barely remembers. (Perhaps the theme of fraternal hostility prepares for what immediately follows.) Then he gets on to *Had Gadia*, "An Only Kid" (Joyce substitutes a lamb), a children's song written in a mélange of Hebrew and Aramaic sung at the end of the seder, a few minutes after the chanting of "Next year in Jerusalem." The song is structured like "This is the House that Jack Built"—the kid being eaten by the cat, who is eaten by

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the dog, who is beaten by the stick, and so on up to God, who kills the angel of death (an eschatological last stanza suppressed in Bloom's summary). But in remembering, more or less, "An Only Kid," Bloom has in fact found the thread he needs, the thread to the wry, realistically diminished, comic messianism with which he will be associated as the novel unfolds. "Justice it means," he says to himself, perhaps vaguely thinking of that last eschatological stanza he has not managed to remember, "but it's everybody eating everyone else. That's what life is after all."

Stephen Daedalus states matters more dramatically, or more apocalyptically, in his famous invocation of history as a nightmare from which we are trying to awake, but Bloom is more of a chagrined realist, duly noting that dog eats dog, or rather dog eats cat, is the rule of the world—"what life is," and yet stubbornly clinging to the idea that there has to be some possibility of justice emerging from the whole murderous mess. He presents in effect a soberly reduced version of Isaiah 11, where the promised ideal king is imagined judging all the downtrodden of the earth in justice, and where the lamb, instead of being eaten by the cat in a cosmic chain of depredation, dwells in peace with the wolf. But Bloom's very longing for justice, however confused, is a reflection of his reiterated association in the novel with the messianic heritage, and it marks a significant shift from the figure of Ulysses, who is chiefly concerned with getting back what is personally his: a limited notion of "justice" within household and kingdom rather than justice as the hallmark of a transfigured global order.

Motivic and allusive reminders of the messianic dimension of this Ulysses continue to appear until the last chapter of the novel, when Molly takes over, with her own female and pervasively pagan vision of redemption. Before that point, the two principal arenas for the display of Bloom's messianism are barroom and whorehouse, with Bloom as comic messiah seen first in the sharp light of satiric realism ("Cyclops") and then in the psychedelic illumination of farcical fantasy ("Circe").

In Barney Kiernan's pub, Bloom, the well-meaning inveterately fumbling spokesman for the idea of universal justice, is caught in a crossfire of critical perspectives: first, that of the nameless vernacular Irish narrator who is inclined to see him as a figure of fun ("with his dunducketymudcoloured mug on him and his old plumeyes rolling about"), and then, that of the habitués of the bar, whose attitudes toward Bloom range from tolerant condescension to the seething hostility of the xenophobic Citizen. It is the latter who sarcastically puts the name of Messiah squarely on Bloom: "That's the new Messiah for Ireland!" To which one of his interlocutors rejoins, both whimsically and sardonically, but in words that in some degree reverse the Citizen's sarcastic negation: "Yes . . . and every male that's born they think it may be their Messiah. And every jew is in a tall state of excitement, I believe, till he knows if he's a father or a mother."

Bloom as Ulysses is a peripatetic and mental adventurer, dreaming of a return to the satisfactions of conjugality, that happy realm of "Warm beds: warm fullblooded life." Bloom as Messiah is a talker rather than a doer, a preacher of truth to the gentiles (hardly a Homeric role) who touchingly trips through confusions as he argues for the necessity to escape the terrible cycle of slaughterer and ox, stick and dog:

> —Persecution, says he, all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations.
> —But do you know what a nation means? says John Wyse.
> —Yes, says Bloom.
> —What is it? says John Wyse.
> —A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.
> —By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.

The genius in the double irony with which Joyce represents his character as the voice of messianic hope is that Bloom's manifest intellectual incapacity is intertwined with his moral capacity. Having invoked the idea of the hatred among nations, he makes it apparent that he has only a dim notion of what a nation might be (and the facts of persecution to which he refers are more pertinent to the relation between national majorities and minorities or individuals than among nations). This confusion is linked to another confusion, about what the Jews are—a nation, a religion, an ethnic group, or, in the modern era, a disparate collection of individuals in transition from being Jews to being something else.

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When Bloom is pressed to defend himself as a Jew, he offers a little catalogue of famous Jews that comprises three baptized Christians of Jewish extraction and one excommunicated Jew, to which he adds, inflaming the Citizen to the point of violence, Jesus and his Father.

The general conceptual muddle, however, about what a nation might be carries a certain paradoxical moral authority. This whole scene, we should recall, was written in the midst of the First World War, at a moment when the technologically advanced European states were, for the supposed cause of the nation, maiming and slaughtering each other's young men on a scale unprecedented in history. Bloom's indignation about persecution seems more important than his fumbling the concept of nation, or, indeed the very fumbling may be Joyce's way of suggesting that it is an empty concept, nothing worth killing for.

To put this paradox of moral capacity in intellectual incapacity somewhat differently, Joyce suggests through his incorrigibly middlebrow hero that there may be moral truth in banality itself because in his view the fundamental truths about the human condition are simple and self-evident and have not changed through the ages. (Joyce's belief in this sort of unchanging truth is what ultimately underwrites his use of two sets of ancient Mediterranean archetypes to shape his modern epic.) A few minutes later in the barroom debate, when the Citizen sarcastically asks Bloom whether he is talking about the New Jerusalem and Bloom answers, "I'm talking about injustice," he goes on to explain, in a characteristic mixture of sincerity and simplicity, what he means:

> Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the opposite of that that is really life.
> —What? says Alf.
> —Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred.

The moral authority of the commonplace is explicitly identified by Bloom when he says, "everybody knows." Behind Bloom, Joyce knows that love as a universal principle of life-affirmation is a soppy cliché as well as a truth, and so he wards off sentimentality by introducing, after a few satiric remarks by Bloom's interlocutors, a whole burlesque paragraph on love: "Love loves to love love. Nurse loves the new chemist. Constable 14A loves Mary Kelly. Gerty MacDowell loves the boy that has the bicycle. M.B. loves a fair gentleman. Le Chi Han lovey up kissy Chi Pu Chow. . . ." And so forth.

Both the force and the limitation of Bloom's inveighing against hatred, persecution, and injustice have to be understood in connection with who he is and where he is located in the world. An Irishman of Jewish-Hungarian extraction, no more than half-accepted by his fellow Dubliners, intermittently exposed to outbursts of hostility like the one unleashed by the Citizen, remembering, at least in principle, a long history of persecution, he has personal knowledge of the corrosive workings of prejudice and hatred, and a kind of self-interest in imagining a society where there would be neither outsider nor insider, neither oppressor nor oppressed. At the same time, he lacks the intellectual equipment to hold in clear view the historical phenomena and social institutions that are the concrete medium of injustice—and, an ineffectual figure hovering on the margins of his own society, he is scarcely in a position to do anything to implement his vision of a world founded on justice. In the end, Bloom as Messiah must slide back into Bloom as Ulysses, a man intent chiefly on getting back into his own conjugal bed, a latter-day hero who will "defeat" Molly's real and imagined suitors not by slaughtering them—"I mean the opposite of hatred"—but by accepting them, in returning to his Penelope, as painful yet finally inconsequential necessities of the irremediably absurd human condition

Toward the end of the great, moving catechism in "Ithaca," Bloom thinks of "the preordained frangibility of the hymen, the presupposed intangibility of the thing itself. . . . the continual production of semen by distillation: the futility of triumph or protest or vindication: the inanity of extolled virtue: the lethargy of nescient matter: the apathy of the stars." Given this destiny of resignation and this situation of social impotence (there are ambiguous intimations in the novel that it may be sexual impotence as well), it makes perfect sense that Bloom's vague messianic hopes, articulated realistically in the representation of his consciousness and his conversa-

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tion, should then be recycled as farce: in a stubbornly unredeemed world, the figure of the would-be redeemer becomes a point of high hilarity for Joyce's verbal vaudeville. This begins in the vivid mock-biblical paragraph that concludes the "Cyclops" episode: Bloom, one recalls, is fleeing the wrath and missiles and snarling dog of the Citizen in a hackney carriage, which Joyce proceeds to convert into Elijah's heavenbound fiery chariot:

When, lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot wherein He stood ascend to heaven. And they beheld Him in the chariot, clothed upon in the glory of the brightness, having raiment as of the sun, fair as the moon and terrible that for awe they durst not look upon Him. And there came a voice out of heaven, calling: *Elijah! Elijah!* And he answered with a main cry: *Abba! Adonai!* And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel.

For all the high jinks of parody, the novel at this point is still flooded with the level daylight of realism, and so the soaring fantasy of Bloom as Elijah or Bloom as ascended Messiah is bounced against a solid counterpoint in the material world, that wonderful last glimpse of Bloom zipping off "at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donohoe's . . . like a shot off a shovel." The narrative then proceeds through "Nausicaa," where pulp-fiction romance is the chief literary point of reference and "Oxen of the Sun," where the long history of English style controls the chapter, to the climactic phantasmagoria of "Circe," where the constraints of realism no longer affect the playing out of Bloom's sundry messianic images.

It is necessary, I think, to speak not of a messianic image but of sundry images, because in the long Nightown episode—aptly characterized by Nabokov as the hallucination of the novel itself rather than of Bloom—Joyce's bumbling spokesman for the idea of universal justice is made to veer wildly from one role to another. At one end of the spectrum, he is identified by two other Dublin Jews who appeared earlier in his stream of consciousness as an out-and-out fake in his messianic pretensions. First Hornblower, the porter of Trinity College, announces Bloom as scapegoat in ringing biblical language:

And he shall carry the sins of the people to Azazel, the spirit which is in the wilderness, and to Lilith, the nighthag, and they shall stone him and defile him, yea, all from Agendath Netaim and from Mizraim, the land of Ham.

The ritual of the scapegoat, Azazel, from Leviticus 16 is joined aptly with Lilith, the primordial demon woman or seductress of rabbinic legend, whose Hebrew name is accurately translated here as "nighthag," for Bloom is, after all, in a brothel, and, throughout, his consciousness confuses messianic aspirations with erotic daydreams. The stoning is probably intended to recall the end of the "Cyclops" episode, except that here those who cast the stones are not only gentiles (the denizens of Mizraim, Hebrew for "Egypt") but also Jews, who are associated with Agendath Netaim, the Zionist "planters' association" that first came to Bloom's attention in the newspaper advertisement he spotted in the pork butcher's.

The recurring Zionist motif is one of Joyce's most ingenious ploys for conflating the figures of Ulysses and the Messiah. Ulysses is a hero headed homeward, where he will reclaim his wife and re-establish his sovereignty over his kingdom. The Messiah in Jewish tradition is to lead his people back to its long-lost homeland and re-establish national sovereignty there. Molly, born in Gibraltar at the other end of the Mediterranean from the Promised Land, is associated with it in Bloom's mind both metaphorically—her "Oriental" sensuality, her connection with lush gardens and melons and other ripe fruit—and also by a kind of stretched metonymy—the Mediterranean itself. But the atoning ritual of Hornblower's prophecy immediately degenerates into humiliating farce:

(All the people cast soft pantomime stones at Bloom. Many bonafide travellers and ownerless dogs come near him and defile him. Mastiansky and Citron approach in gaberdines, wearing long earlocks. They wag their beards at Bloom.)

MASTIANSKY AND CITRON

Belial! Laemlein of Istria, the false Messiah! Abulafia!

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The prophesied stoning turns into a dreamlike charade and the biblical "defilement" into Bloom's being peed on by dogs and passersby. Mastiansky and Citron, two Jews of Bloom's acquaintance, appear here as old-style Orthodox pietists, dressed in gaberdines (that is, caftans) and sporting earlocks and beards in order to stress that they speak on behalf of an "authentic" Jewry in their denunciation of Bloom. What kind of Messiah, they suggest, could this down-at-the-heels advertising canvasser be, uncircumcised, married to a Christian, coming upon his vision of the Return to Zion in a pork butcher's wrapping papers? And so they place him on the roll-call of infamy of false messiahs who led the Jews astray, rejecting his claim, a few minutes earlier in the Nightown psycho-farce: "Yea on the word of a Bloom, ye shall ere long enter into the golden city which is to be, the new Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future." Perhaps for them the bogusness of his messianic self-annunciation is betrayed by the very fact that the "colossal edifice" that commands the landscape of the new Bloomusalem is "built in the shape of a huge pork kidney."

Yet precisely what is endearing about Bloom's elevation to revealed Messiah in Nightown is the exuberance with which it is carried off, an exuberance that represents a heightening to wild hyperbole of his stubborn ethical optimism in the face of repeated defeat that is visible in the realistic sections of the novel. His notion of the messianic age is derived from the modern progressivist commonplaces that are his mental stock-in-trade, here huddled together with reckless élan: "New worlds for old. Union of all, jew, moslem and gentile. . . . Electric dish-scrubbers. Tuberculosis, lunacy, war and mendicancy must now cease. . . . No more patriotism of barspongers and dropsical imposters. Free money, free love and a free lay church in a free lay state."

Through all this, the comic possibilities of Bloom the vestigial Jew as Messiah are brilliantly exploited. At one memorable juncture, rams' horns, which according to the prophet Malachi are to announce the coming of the redeemer, blare, and the standard of Zion is raised. Then Bloom himself speaks, according to his lights, in the language of the prophets: "Aleph Beth Ghimel Daleth Hagadah Tephilim Kosher Yom Kippur Hanukah Roschaschana Beni Brith Bar Mitzvah Mazzoth Askenazim Meshuggah Talith." These solemnly intoned words are a wonderful potpourri of gibberish, just the sort of scraps of Hebrew lexicon that a marginal Jew such as Bloom would retain from childhood memory: the first four letters of the Hebrew alphabet; the Hagadah or Passover homeservice referred to earlier by Bloom; tephilim, the leather boxes containing biblical verses and attached to thongs worn by Jewish males during the daily morning service; the names of three holidays; Beni (actually, B'nai) Brith, the Jewish fraternal organization; Bar Mitzvah, the confirmation ceremony; Mazzoth, the unleavened bread eaten on Passover; Askenazim, the general term for Central and East-European Jews; Meshuggah, crazy (the Hebrew term that becomes pungently standard in colloquial Yiddish); and Talith, prayer shawl. In the midst of all these sits Kosher, a term Bloom knows, but a practice which, as a purchaser of pork kidneys, he definitely eschews.

There is hardly a messianic message in this Hebrew word-salad, though it is certainly quite funny and a faithful reflection of Bloom's cultural world as a vestigial Jew. The only character in Nightown who speaks a proper Hebrew sentence is not Bloom but Zoe the whore. After appearing in the phantasmagoria as the beloved woman of the Song of Songs, *"Murmuring singsong with the music, her odalisk lips lusciously smeared with salve of swinefat and rosewater,"* she pronounces the untranslated words, *"Schorach ani wenowach, benoith Hierushaloim,"* that is, "Dark am I but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem." Bloom, taking note of the pronunciation, which does not necessarily prove that he understands the meaning, is "fascinated" and remarks, "I thought you were of good stock by your accent."

The general aim of the "Circe" episode is to extrude as surreal comic theatrics whatever is merely implicit elsewhere in the characters of the novel and their relationships. If Bloom does not share the blustering, boastful male assertiveness of the more typical Dubliners, if he is more wifely than husband to Molly, in "Circe" he can be presented as "the new womanly man" who, at the point of condemnation by an angry mob, is pardoned because he is about to have a child and then gives birth to eight sons, all of whom have names suggesting money and at once become captains of indus-

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try and public administration. This amounts to a benign comic version of the paranoid fantasy of a worldwide Jewish monetary conspiracy, as in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and Joyce is quick to link it with Bloom's messianic profile, for immediately after the birth of the eight sons a Voice asks, "Bloom, are you the Messiah ben Joseph or ben David?" and Bloom, echoing Jesus's words to Pilate, replies, "(*Darkly.*) 'You have said it.'"

The Jew as an archetype of Western lore and legend characteristically figures as a father or old man—because he represents an older, superannuated dispensation and because he is associated with the "Old" Testament that is displaced by the New. In the anti-Semitic versions of this archetype, Norman Cohen has persuasively argued, he is a castrating or vampiric father, perhaps because he is dimly perceived by Christendom as having imposed upon it an onerous and restrictive moral code. In Joyce's deft hands, the whole archetype is given a decidedly philo-Semitic spin. He neatly binds together the Jew as father with the Homeric image of Ulysses the father seeking reunion with Telemachus his son. Bloom is actually only thirty-eight, but he feels much older: experience has bruised him, crumpled him, left him with a certain sense of fatigue and diminished capacities, and that youthful moment when he lolled in the grass with Molly on Ben Howth seems hopelessly distant.

In normal literary circumstances, comedy is a young man's game: it is the young lovers who are the locus of the desire of comic fulfillment while the old folks create the obstacles the younger generation must overcome. One of the distinctive features of Joyce's *Ulysses* is that it creates a resonant comedy of middle life: Molly in her thirties can still dream, quite exuberantly, of a horizon of fresh mornings bursting with flowers and love; and Bloom, dog-tired from his wanderings, bearing a lifetime's sackload of failures, can fantasize becoming a father again, at least symbolically, and can sense in his return to Molly's recumbent body "the islands of the blessed, the isles of Greece, the land of promise . . . adipose posterior female hemispheres, redolent of milk and honey and of excretory sanguine and seminal warmth." Precisely in this regard, Joyce grasps the potential for a reversed directionality in the historical archetype he ex-

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ploits. The exiled people of Israel, seen from without, is the Wandering Jew, the ancient, undying figure of the blighted outcast; seen from within the people that stubbornly clings to its messianic expectations through long exile, praying, "Renew our days as of old," is the very type of hope triumphing over experience, nurturing through adversity the dream of return to the warm seedbed of origins and new birth.

All this works beautifully in Joyce's novel because it is not merely an *idea,* cleverly elaborated, but a rich attitudinal ambiance that is generated through the realized individual character of Bloom, who is often ridiculous, sometimes pathetic, and frequently ignorant or even foolish, but nevertheless persists in his hopefulness and his simple decency, like Sancho Panza (with a strong admixture of Quixote), or like Chaplin's Tramp. This poignancy of Bloom as comic hero is nowhere more vivid than in the moment he leads Stephen through the early morning darkness with a candle—"a light unto the gentiles"—to the rear entrance of his home. Bloom's last act of fumbling (he has forgotten his key) becomes a seriocomic image of his role as existential Everyman. "What comforted his misapprehension?" asks the catechist-narrator, referring to Stephen's philosophically fraught, and drunken, words just spoken that Bloom has not altogether grasped.

That as a competent keyless citizen he had proceeded energetically from the unknown to the known through the incertitude of the void.

In what order of precedence, with what attendant ceremony was the exodus from the house of bondage to the wilderness of inhabitation effected?

Lighted Candle in Stick borne by
BLOOM.

Diaconal Hat on Ashplant borne by
STEPHEN.

With what intonation *secreto* of what commemorative psalm?

The 113th, *modus peregrinus: In exitu Israël de Egypto: domus Jacob de populo barbaro.*

What did each do at the door of egress?

Bloom set the candlestick on the floor. Stephen put the hat on his head.

For what creature was the door of egress an ingress?

For a cat.

What spectacle confronted them when they, first the host, then the guest, emerged silently, doubly dark, from obscurity by a passage from the rere of the house into the penumbra of the garden?

The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit.

The way not to read this passage, or *Ulysses* as a whole, is to take the symbolism too seriously. Joyce is obviously playing with Dante but it is a game, not rigorous emulation. He pointedly invokes Dante's system of layered significances by quoting the very psalm Dante used in his letter to Can Grande to illustrate the traditional four levels of simultaneous meaning that he sought to use in *The Divine Comedy.* (But note the satiric paradox in the transition from "the house of bondage" to "the wilderness of inhabitation.") The enrapturing vision of the stars vouchsafed Bloom-Virgil and Stephen-Dante is of course a citation of the last line of the *Inferno,* though elaborated by the metaphor of the celestial tree heavy with nocturnal fruit.

Yet Bloom is not really Virgil but only a comic gesture toward him, and toward Ulysses, and toward the Messiah. He is a "guide" to Stephen only in the limited sense that, even with his modest intellectual resources, he is more in touch with the carnal and ethical imperatives of human existence than Stephen is, though it takes an optimistic reader to imagine this will lead Stephen to change his life. And so we remain with the image of a middle-aged man and a young man—the one bleary with fatigue and the other with drink—standing together in a Dublin backyard by the cat door, looking up at the starry sky and seeing in that silent heaventree a sidereal efflorescence of the recurrent dream of luscious fruit and beauty that Bloom has nurtured from the start. It is a moment of genuine vision, and through the next few pages it will launch Bloom on a mental trajectory across light years and eons. The messianic side of Bloom is drawn back to these dizzying, perhaps restorative, perspectives of cosmic vastness, of perfection and beauty. Bloom as "Messiah" serves the purpose of repeatedly projecting out of the represented world of the novel a

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horizon of other, and better, possibilities.

Bloom, however, is not only imagined by the novelist with uncompromising realism but, for all his quixotic impulses, is finally a realist himself; and this earthbound other side—is it the Ulyssean side?—of the visionary hero leads him to the conclusion, after a few minutes' reflection, "That it was not a heaven-tree, not a heavengrot, not a heavenbeast, not a heavenman. That it was a Utopia . . . a mobility of illusory forms immobilised in space, remobilised in air: a past which possibly had ceased to exist as a present before its actual spectators had entered actual present existence." This is perhaps comedy's greatest gift, to convey a sense of real things, unsparingly shorn of the veil of illusion, and yet to sustain, as Bloom under the vastness of the heavens goes on to do, the stirring prospect of hope for a more perfect order of things.

Il a accusé!

THE DREYFUS AFFAIR: 'J'ACCUSE' AND OTHER WRITINGS. *By Emile Zola. Edited by Alain Pagès. Translated by Eleanor Levieux. Yale University Press. $32.50.*

Reviewed by CATHERINE LEGOUIS

A convulsion of courts-martial, lawsuits, and political and journalistic battles that tore France apart between 1894 and 1906, the Dreyfus Affair makes Watergate seem straightforward and almost inconsequential. Emile Zola became active in the Affair when it was well under way but, once in, quickly became a major figure and played a decisive role in the pardoning and later rehabilitation of Dreyfus.

The Dreyfus Affair, a collection of Zola's writings edited by Alain Pagès and translated by Eleanor Levieux, constitutes one of the clearest and most engrossing expositions of this complex case. It is made especially affecting by the juxtaposition of Zola's public writings—powerful exhortations and attacks—and his poignant private correspondence with his wife, mistress, and friends. Pagès and Levieux provide an excellent introduction and append short biographies of the figures involved as well as a detailed chronology, indispensable in finding one's way through the thicket of libel suits, political upheavals, and suicide that made up the Affair.

In the fall of 1894, the Intelligence Bureau of the French army intercepted a letter—the infamous "bordereau"—listing defense documents that the writer, a spy within the General Staff, had sent to the Germans. After an incompetent investigation, Major du Paty de Clam, the officer in charge, arrested as a traitor Captain Alfred Dreyfus, son of a family of Jewish Alsatian refugees. In a court-martial marred by serious irregularities, Dreyfus was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island, the brutal penal colony off the shore of French Guyana. He bore this injustice with remarkable fortitude and dignity. Dreyfus's brother Mathieu began a public campaign for a new trial almost immediately, but made little headway for a year. Most of the press—much of it was virulently anti-Semitic—assumed Dreyfus's guilt, but in November of 1896 the writer Bernard-Lazare published the first major pro-Dreyfus pamphlet in Brussels.

Meantime, behind the scenes, in March 1896 the Intelligence Bureau had intercepted a message from the Germans to Major Ferdinand Esterhazy, also of the General Staff. After a more thorough investigation, the new head of the Intelligence Bureau, Major Georges Picquart, had come to believe that Esterhazy was in fact the spy and that Dreyfus had been wrongly convicted. When he reported this to his superiors, they removed him as head of intelligence, ordered his silence, and sent him on an inspection tour first of Eastern France, then of Tunisia. Esterhazy was eventually quietly removed from his position, but the General Staff closed ranks and refused to acknowledge any mistake. Word of Picquart's discovery finally reached the liberal Auguste Scheurer-Kestner, vice-president of the Senate, through friends of Picquart in July of 1897, and Scheurer-Kestner became the first major political figure to join those working for a new trial, or "révision."

The Dreyfus Affair was now in full swing, fracturing society into Dreyfusards and anti-

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Dreyfusards, who fulminated against each other in the press, demonstrated and counter-demonstrated in the streets, and fought bitter battles around dining tables and on the floor of the Senate. The anti-Dreyfusards, at this time clearly in the ascendancy, were a coalition of anti-republican nationalist forces—monarchist, clericalist, or militarist—and middle-of-the-road nationalist republicans, some tainted by anti-Semitism themselves and all worried about being ousted by the right if they sided with the Dreyfusards. The Dreyfusards tended to be from among the liberal intelligentsia and the more radical republican forces, and were markedly anti-clerical. The growing socialist movement joined them belatedly and reluctantly.

In the fall of 1897 the balance began to shift. In October, Ernest Vaughan and Georges Clemenceau founded the newspaper *L'Aurore,* which was to become the leading Dreyfusard organ. After Scheurer-Kestner presented his evidence privately to the president and prime minister in November—to no avail—he held a series of meetings at his home, at one of which Emile Zola was finally recruited into the movement. In November, Mathieu Dreyfus publicly accused Esterhazy of being the spy, forcing the military into an investigation, and Zola began writing a series of articles in *Le Figaro* as well as his powerful Dreyfusard pamphlets. In January 1898, Esterhazy was court-martialed but acquitted, in part because three handwriting experts declared the "bordereau" was not in his hand.

On the morning of January 13, 1898, two days after the acquittal and at the Dreyfusards' lowest ebb, *L'Aurore* published Zola's "J'accuse!" which blasted the government for cowardice and the military authorities for covering up a deliberate miscarriage of justice. In it, Zola invited the government to charge him with libel, in hopes that during a trial it would be forced to disclose the truth about Dreyfus. More than 200,000 copies of the newspaper sold in one day, ten times the usual circulation. Picquart, back from Tunisia, was jailed the same day and soon thrown out of the army. The three handwriting experts charged Zola with libel, and in February 1898 he had to be escorted through angry, right-wing mobs to his trial. Despite a brilliant "Statement to the Jury" (duly published in *L'Aurore*), Zola was convicted, in large part because the Chief of the General Staff, General de Boisdeffre, had, in his testimony, threatened mass resignations of the General Staff if the jury dared to acquit Zola. Zola immediately appealed. The first half of 1898 was rife with bitter suits, countersuits, and appeals, as the handwriting experts, Zola, and the judges of Esterhazy's court martial all sued one another.

In the May elections for the Assembly, many Dreyfusard deputies lost their seats. The government fell, but a new one, led by Brisson, was no more sympathetic to the Dreyfusards than the previous one, with the new Minister of War, Godefroy Cavaignac, even declaring that secret documents proved Dreyfus guilty. In July both Esterhazy and Picquart were again arrested; soon after, Zola published a scathing "Letter to Prime Minister Brisson."

On July 18, Zola was again convicted of libel and sentenced to prison, but, at the insistence of Clemenceau, he escaped to England that same night, thus providing the Dreyfusards a legal technicality that prevented the judicial process, which was keeping the Dreyfus case before the public, from coming to a close. The lawsuits continued without him, with his friends and supporters paying the increasingly heavy fines he incurred. Zola lived incognito in a series of hotels in and near London, at first alone and lonely, then visited by his mistress Jeanne Rozerot and their two children, then by his wife, Alexandrine. Colleagues and supporters—including Clemenceau and Jean Jaures—met with him secretly from time to time, but the French authorities either could not find him or decided not to try to extradite him, so that despite his considerable anxiety, he was left alone. He spent almost a year in exile, fretting, corresponding with his friends, wife, and mistress, and writing his novel *Fécondité.*

Back in Paris, the Affair continued. Picquart was released, then re-arrested, and Esterhazy was again investigated. A turning point was reached in August 1898 when the military authorities themselves discovered that the most damning document in Dreyfus's secret file was in fact a forgery concocted by Colonel Joseph Henry, a friend and accomplice of Major du Paty de Clam. Henry was soon arrested and committed suicide in prison, Cavaignac resigned, and Esterhazy fled to England. By October the Supreme Court of Appeal was seriously considering a request for a new trial for

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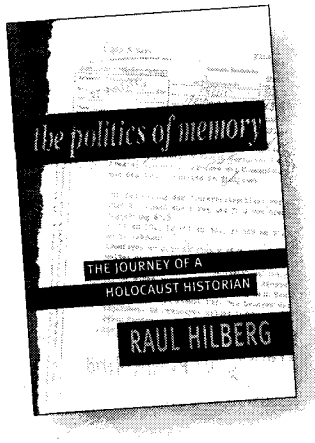
Dreyfus. In February 1899, President Faure, who had been an obstinate opponent of a "révision," died and was succeeded by Emile Loubet. Passions ran so high that a small nationalist uprising had to be put down by force. In June the Supreme Court of Appeal overturned Dreyfus's conviction, and he was brought back from Devil's Island to face a new court-martial.

Sensing victory, Zola immediately returned to Paris, on the same day that *L'Aurore* published his article "Justice," and appealed his own libel conviction again. In a mid-July article in *Le Matin*, Esterhazy admitted that he had written the "bordereau" but blamed everything on his superior officers. Dreyfus's second trial, this time in Rennes, took one month, and on September 9, despite Esterhazy's confession, he was again, incomprehensibly, convicted, prompting Zola's outraged article "The Fifth Act" in *L'Aurore*. President Loubet soon pardoned him, but most Dreyfusards found the pardon an unsatisfactory half-measure, some even urging Dreyfus not to accept (Zola was not among them).

The Affair wound down over several more years, ending in Dreyfus's complete rehabilitation, which Zola did not live to see. The legal attacks against Zola were indefinitely suspended in late 1899. In 1900 the Assembly passed an amnesty law, the main result of which was to protect the military authorities from prosecution; though the amnesty included him, Zola condemned it in powerful letters to the Senate and the President. His last action in the Affair was to publish *La Vérité en marche* in 1901, a collection of all of his Dreyfusard articles and pamphlets. He died at his home in October 1902. In July 1906 the Supreme Court of Appeal overturned Dreyfus's second conviction and the Chamber of Deputies reinstated him in the army. When Clemenceau was named Prime Minister in October 1906, he chose Picquart as his Minister of War. Finally, to quote the last entry in Pagès's chronology: "4 June 1908: During the official ceremony in which Zola's ashes are transferred to the Pantheon, a journalist named Louis Grégori fires two shots at Dreyfus, wounding him in the arm."

One of the strengths of *The Dreyfus Affair* is that the translation succeeds in capturing Zola's flights of poetic passion, as, confident

Raul Hilberg's long-awaited memoir is "that rarity, a contemporary autobiography that is actually too short....One is left wanting more."—Kirkus Reviews



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of the infallibility of reason, he put the striking imagery characteristic of French naturalist prose at the service of the Dreyfusard cause, always referred to as "the Truth." The sharp contrasts and sheer verbal power—such as the repeated phrase "I accuse" that becomes a withering hammer blow by the end of "J'accuse!"—are reminiscent of the strongest pages of *Germinal*. It was in his private correspondence with Jeanne and especially Alexandrine, however, that Zola allowed himself moments of doubt and despair, along with the de rigueur French complaints about British food. This articulation between public and private personas forms the axis of Zola's involvement in the case. There is a stark contrast between the ringing calls for justice in the public writings collected in Part I and the subsequent pathos of the private letters of Part II where the famous writer is suddenly reduced to coping with the practical realities of exile, separated for the first time from those who loved and took care of him.

Zola's contribution to the Dreyfus Affair has been variously evaluated, some finding it crucial, others merely tangential. Certainly, he was the most eloquent of Dreyfus's defenders, and his intervention revived the courage of the faltering Dreyfusards. In a move radical to the point of being perceived as anarchistic, he concentrated his attacks on specific top political and military leaders, instead of broad institutions such as the army and the courts as a whole, bringing about a complete turnaround of opinion by providing readers who supported the military with a rationale for being simultaneously pro-army and pro-Dreyfus. By attacking the government from the left, Zola forced the right wing to defend the system it had been attacking until then. Did Zola fully realize the force his initiative would have? He chose his cause well, but so did the anti-Dreyfusards, who waged their later attacks on Zola as fiercely and relentlessly as they did on Dreyfus.

One cannot ignore the element of political and literary opportunism in Zola's involvement in the Affair. Zola both used the movement and allowed himself to be used by others. Perhaps the figure who stood to gain the most from Zola's intervention was Georges Clemenceau, who, compromised by the Panama Affair, had been driven from politics in 1893. Seeing in the Dreyfus Affair a vehicle for his own political rehabilitation, Clemenceau organized much of the campaign, even contributing the title *J'accuse!* to Zola's broadside. On the strength of the Dreyfusard victory, Clemenceau became Senator in 1902 and Prime Minister in 1906.

Zola, on the other hand, set his sights higher. Like all writers of the time, he was obsessed by Victor Hugo, who had died only ten years earlier, draped in the glory of the man of letters emerging triumphant from persecution at the hands of dull-witted authorities. There is in France a long tradition of writers courting exile, martyrdom, and fame by opposing their sovereign: Voltaire vs. Louis XV, Chateaubriand vs. Bonaparte. Hugo had become a father of the state through his standoff with Napoléon III. A volatile mixture of idealism, ambition, and exhibitionism characterized them all, and Zola's obvious egotism can be off-putting. When he cries out in an 1897 interview, "Ah, if only we had a Lamartine, a Louis Blanc, a Victor Hugo!" it is obvious that he planned to wear their mantle, even though Zola did not play Saint George nearly to the extent that Hugo did. Nonetheless, without Zola's commitment, courage, and brilliant literary skill, fully documented in this readable and exciting book, Dreyfus would have rotted on Devil's Island.

Private Lessons

LESSONS FROM PRIVILEGE: THE AMERICAN PREP SCHOOL TRADITION. *By Arthur G. Powell. Harvard University Press. $35.*

Reviewed by DAVID V. HICKS

Before drawing any lessons, Arthur Powell reminds us of some facts about American private education that are easy to ignore or forget. How many, even among those who teach in private schools, understand the countercultural mission of these schools or can accept that their efforts are directed at rather narrowly defined measured achievements (grades,

✪ DAVID V. HICKS is an independent school graduate. He has headed three independent schools over the past eighteen years, two of them day schools, one boarding.

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wins, good behavior, college admissions) rather than at intellectual growth or spiritual enlightenment? How many appreciate the double irony of a system that creates educational incentives in private schools for the few who are already, by and large, motivated while denying them to almost everyone else? How many remember that the traditional American private school was established and designed for the average and often downright mediocre student? (Louis Auchincloss surely remembered when he prompted his fictionalized version of Groton's founding headmaster to attribute "the greatness of the private school" to the fact that "it can sometimes turn a third-rate student into a second-rate one. We can't boast publicly of such triumphs, but they are still our glory.") A countercultural mission, an anti-intellectual preoccupation with tangible signs of accomplishment, an environment bristling with incentives, a history of preparing average students for college—traits such as these are the basis for Powell's claim that private schools offer "lessons from privilege."

Nowadays one doesn't associate America's elite private schools with the average or lackluster student. Since World War II—and especially since the 1960s—private schools have worked assiduously to replace the social exclusivity of their past with a more acceptable academic elitism. This change, welcomed by many, has nonetheless disguised some happy truths about the snobbish old prep school—one of them being its systemic support for and benefit to the average student.

In the days when a son of one of New York's Four Hundred was registered for St. Paul's at birth, and when attendance at St. Paul's practically guaranteed a place at Harvard, the School was bound to serve a more academically diverse population. In our haste to condemn the social, racial, and sexual bias of this arrangement, we might underestimate the educational challenge such a school faced and fail to appreciate the manner in which it, to a significant degree, answered the challenge. We might also overlook the improbable similarities between the challenges it confronted and those now confronting our public schools in the 1990s. Today the truly problematic diversity is one of ability and motivation. Outside political pressures appear to favor extreme and exceptional cases while neglecting the great middle. The absence of external

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educational incentives for all but the very few who aspire to highly selective colleges is exacerbated by a pervasive commercial attack on educational values aimed at adolescents. The educational mission has less to do with awakening the life of the mind and developing independent thinkers than with forming decent citizens and honing their skills for the workplace and their abilities for coping with life. This begins to sound not all that different from the challenge of teaching the sons of the rich a century ago.

At that time, private schools—borrowing from English public schools, German *gymnasia*, and Swiss theories—constructed total school environments that addressed each of these issues, problems, and questions in turn. Powell breaks this environment into its component parts: the family culture, the human scale, the small classes, and the time set aside for student-teacher meetings outside of class, the incentive system, the balance between expecting everyone to reach a high common standard and making allowances for individual talents and interests, athletics and arts for everyone, a code (with consequences) that insists that students be nice and work hard. Powell describes how each part advanced the school's educational mission. Nor is he blind to the irony inherent in our attempts to convert these schools, designed largely for mediocre talents, into hothouses for the best and the brightest while keeping the total school environment largely intact.

Although Powell's title and theme reach for a wider audience than the relatively small one found in independent schools, I doubt that it will find this audience. The author is much better, in my opinion, at building the independent school mountain than at extracting any valuable ore from it. Most of the lessons from privilege, as Powell himself seems to be aware, are unlikely to be adopted by public schools; or, like the reorganization of large consolidated schools into smaller subschools, they will require such creative adaptation that any similarities will vanish. There are many reasons for this—budgets, unions, normal schools, state legislatures—but the most important reason is never stated, though easily enough deduced. The independent school works—when it works—not because of any one or any combination of its parts, but because of all the parts working together in harmony and balance to form a compelling and unified culture.

On the other hand, Powell's independent school audience will be riveted; it will find much in his book to admire and speculate upon. I can imagine hundreds of headmasters handing this book to the new cohort of independent school teachers next fall and for many falls to come. In less than two hundred fifty pages, Powell has described these schools with dazzling verisimilitude. Some members of this audience, for example, will be shocked—although I hope not dismayed—to discover that their wonderful school with all its superior qualities, endearing characteristics, and peculiar traditions is very much like the independent school across town or in the next city. Fantastically, hundreds of these schools have evolved over the past century into a genus with remarkably consistent traits and predictable instincts. Powell makes this point without belaboring it, by describing features such as the adviser system in such exquisite detail that one might think he has a particular school in mind, when in fact his description probably fits a thousand schools.

Of considerable interest to Powell's private school audience will be his grasp of the double-edged realities of independent school life. These realities make any public school borrowings all the trickier, but they tell the complicated truth about how thrilling and maddening it can be to work in a private school. Powell plays with the curious contradiction between the old school insistence on hard work and high standards for everyone and the new school belief that such innate qualities as aptitude and interest are more likely than perseverance to determine performance. By trying to embrace both views, independent schools tend to confuse students and, because they are in a competitive market, are apt to make compromises that can hurt as well as help the children and families they are meant to serve. For reasons that Powell goes into at some length, prep schools have "few truly bad teachers, but many average ones."

Lessons from Privilege is refreshing in its candor. There is an urgency in the author's tone that may do more than his specific prescriptions to recommend it to the broad audience he hopes to find. "Schools," Powell writes, "are virtually the last democratic line of defense against negative forces that lavish enormous

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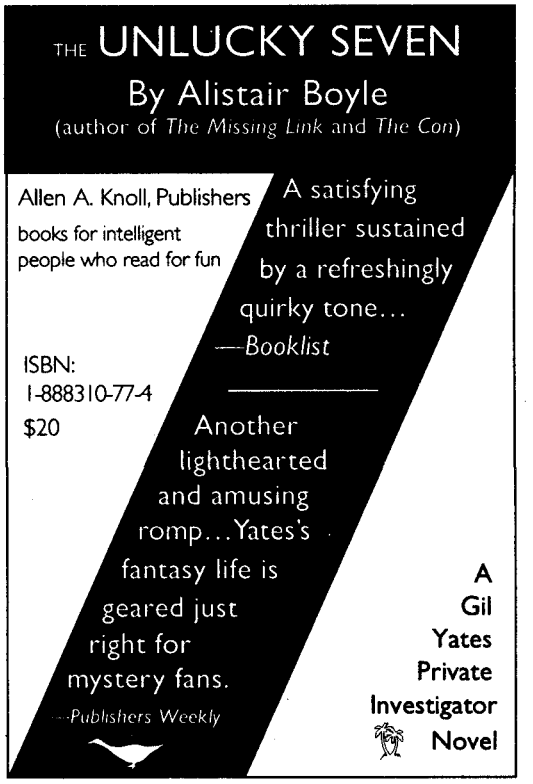
funds on inculcating anti-educational values in youth. The central job of schools is to emancipate the young not just from ignorance but from a sterile pop culture of mental passivity." In this defense, in spite of all their claims and complaints to the contrary, American businesses—including the college business—have largely abandoned the schools by refusing to take seriously the work students do in school when making decisions to admit or hire them. Their refusal to create real incentives for academic achievement is what makes the total environment of the private school an attractive—if often impractical—solution.

Yet, whether the private school itself can sustain excellence in such a pervasively hostile culture—especially when it is afraid to be as plainspoken in its opposition to the culture as Powell is, and when it has rejected the loftier aims and religious purposes of an earlier time—remains to be seen.



That's Entertainment

GENERATION X GOES TO COLLEGE: AN EYE-OPENING ACCOUNT OF TEACHING IN POST-MODERN AMERICA. *By Peter Sacks. Open Court. $17.95.*

Reviewed by HENRY BAUER

Scattered mostly in the back and far side rows were young males with professional sports baseball caps, often worn backwards. Completing the uniform . . . was usually a pair of baggy shorts, a team T-shirt, and an ample attitude. Slumped in their chairs, they stared at me with looks of disdain and boredom, as if to say, "Who in hell cares . . . ? Say something to amuse me." I would encounter this look and The Attitude often . . . a look of utter disengagement.

Thus does Peter Sacks recall his baptism as a teacher. But dismay over today's college students is not restricted to neophyte teachers:

The distinguished scholar with an international reputation, who for years lectured to a class of two hundred, suddenly finds his audience dwindle to fifteen as a result of a snide, ill-informed, comment on a tip sheet. Those unwilling to play to the crowd all too often surrender to disgust or cynicism and give up as they serve out the years to retirement. Or worse still, they . . . inflate their grades. They lighten their reading assignments. . . .

Student quality drifted down, perhaps not in terms of scores or self-esteem, but certainly in terms of willingness to follow a sustained line of thought or ability to venture beyond high-school slogans.

That comes from Oscar Handlin, Carl M. Loeb Professor Emeritus at Harvard ("A Career at Harvard," THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Winter 1996).

The fact is that there has been a sea change in higher education. Such cultural changes at first are felt in almost subliminal fashion: we sense rather than perceive something different where before all was familiar. At the next stage we presume some local phenomenon: "Perhaps I'm burned out as a teacher?" (as a department chairman suggested to me). "Perhaps we've grown too fast, admitted too many unqualified students?" (as the physics faculty

HENRY BAUER's most recent books are *Scientific Literacy and the Myth of the Scientific Method* and (under the pen name Josef Martin) *To Rise Above Principle: The Memoirs of an Unreconstructed Dean.*

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worried at a recently expanding university). In Oklahoma a geologist is invited by his dean to take a break from teaching the introductory classes in which students are performing less and less well.

Eventually, the recognition spreads by word of mouth that what Walter Deal observes at Irvine, California, and Dale Arrington in Rapid City, South Dakota, and I in Blacksburg, Virginia, has also come to the attention of many others across the country. Finally the change becomes a publicly recognized phenomenon.

Generation X Goes to College should enlighten the many teachers who have worried that their personal competence has forsaken them. It may also alert the public that a major cultural sea change has overtaken higher education. Since Peter Sacks is a professional journalist of sufficient distinction to be nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, the book cannot be dismissed as a self-serving piece from the professoriat. Attracted by the opportunity to teach, Sacks found the classroom grotesquely different from what he had expected—and grotesquely different from his own student days roughly fifteen years ago.

Generation X Goes to College has two parts. The first, "The Sandbox Experiment," "is simply a true portrayal of [Sacks's] experience as a teacher." Here Sacks found that "nobody in the system had much of a stake in shoring up educational standards"; that "many teachers saw an increasing number of students as practically unteachable" while "being evaluated by the very students who might have a hard time getting out of bed to get to class, or trouble distinguishing a comma from a semi-colon in written English" and who "harbored a strong sense of being entitled to easy success and good grades, even though they were often unwilling to work to achieve them . . . [and] quick to put the entire blame for failure on the shoulders of their teachers."

Sacks quickly discovered the lay of the land. His enthusiastic striving to have students learn met with no appreciation from most of his students: "In trying to be rigorous and demanding, I seemed to be in a distinct minority." His "chairman came up with the idea that I might consider taking an acting course in order to improve my class presentation skills." Colleagues advised him to "play the game . . . teach to the evaluations." So quite consciously Sacks devised the "Sandbox Experiment": could he attain tenure and praise from his peers and superiors by forgetting about high standards and "pandering, usually in the form of grades"? Yes, of course he could and did: "Excellence wasn't really the point. . . . [T]he real point was whether you kept students sufficiently amused and entertained."

The descriptions in *Generation X Goes to College* are graphic and persuasive. What college teacher could fail to guffaw on reading how Sacks started his teaching stint by assuming that his students "would read the assigned books, take notes when I lectured, and show up for class . . . to be adults [so] that I could therefore treat them as adults"? Sacks writes: "Recalling the reading demands I had in college, I asked the students to read approximately one book per week." No chance.

"Maybe we can work something out," Sacks heard from students who had missed assignments for no good reason. "I *need* an A" or a "B" or a "2.0 average," other students told him, presuming "that it was somehow my responsibility that they get their desired grade . . . my fault if they didn't."

Grade inflation has been the rule for at least three decades. Anonymous "evaluation" of instructors by their students has been commonplace for about as long. *Generation X Goes to College* argues, convincingly, that the two are inevitably connected; and that they have now been joined by the Attitude of disrespectful students counting on entertainment and good grades. Any genuinely demanding and rewarding higher education is thereby made unfeasible.

There will be a rearguard action against Sacks's report, on the part of administrators and others. They will continue to insist that student evaluations are not a significant factor in what has gone wrong. But Sacks is not alone; many studies and analyses show that student ratings of instructors measure characteristics largely independent of, and in part negatively correlated with, student learning. The rearguard action will include, according to Sacks, "some people in higher education [who] are . . . beginning to adopt the same rhetoric as their counterparts in elementary education, that good teaching *is* tantamount to entertainment." He cites "the authors of one educational journal article [that] concluded: 'If effective teachers are entertaining

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teachers, and today's media-saturated students expect to be entertained and cannot tolerate boredom, then it is time to underscore the need for entertainment in the classroom.'"

It will be asserted that Sacks merely gives anecdotes. Yet in 1986, 75 percent of my students in freshman chemistry did better on their final exam than on quizzes—as they should, given the same type of multiple-choice questions on the same material; but by 1993, only 30 percent were doing so. I have similar evidence from others in other places. The 1995 survey by the Higher Education Research Institute showed high-school seniors spending less time studying or doing homework (only 35 percent reported spending at least six hours per week) and the highest percentage ever of students reporting being frequently bored in class (34 percent). How is college suddenly to transform these kids into students motivated to learn and spend time, *lots* of time, memorizing and working problems and *thinking*?

Part two of *Generation X Goes to College*, "Education in Postmodern America," tries to make sense of the cultural sea change that has inundated us. Sacks's reasons go beyond "latchkey kids, divorced parents, and generation gaps," as well as the parents' guilt that leads them to overindulge and fail to train their children. Sacks touches on "the apparent revolt against reason and thoughtfulness . . . [and] the overwhelming dominance of America's amusement culture [that aren't] limited to the habits of twenty-year-olds." Elsewhere he notes: "Born between 1965 and 1980 . . . GenXers have grown up in a world in which 'truth' and 'reality' are . . . an image created on a video screen"; "a world in which nearly everything else was negotiable, flexible, changeable; why not grades?" As one twenty-eight-year-old told Sacks, "Generation X is not a thing; it's the lack of a thing, the lack of a positive theory, or an opinion about anything. . . . Everything is up for grabs."

There is the pervasive notion of the customer-consumer as king. The "shift from academic merit to student consumerism," as David Riesman saw in 1981, "is one of the two greatest reversals of direction in all the history of American higher education; the other being the replacement of the classical college by the modern university a century ago." Consider what student-as-consumer means: "How

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hard should a consumer have to work at buying something?" As one member of Generation X told Sacks, "If there's a unifying force of our generation, it's TV." One resource for understanding present problems is Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business.*

So much is beyond dispute: The average performance of college students has declined to a dismaying degree over roughly the past decade. Students seem no less bright or intelligent, but they simply put in less effort, studying little if at all. My further impressions, informed by those of many others, are that vocational curricula—colleges of engineering in particular—have seen relatively little of these symptoms as yet, perhaps just a decline in the rate of class attendance; that the dozen or twenty most selective universities in the country have thus far seen relatively little of the symptoms; that the best students—say the top 10 percent—are as good as ever, perhaps just a shade less self-motivated.

But even if these impressions are at all accurate, they are not grounds for satisfaction. Those top students were (doubtless, in the main) set on their way by their earliest years at home. For the greater part of a century or thereabouts, public education was sufficiently rigorous and open so that for many it served as sufficient means to considerable upward social mobility. Since that is no longer the case, society could settle into quasi-hereditary "haves" and "have-nots-*and-will-never-haves*," the likes of which America has not before known.

Dismayed as Sacks is at the condition of today's students, he is sure that the students themselves are not the ones to blame. They have been "conditioned by an overly nurturing, hand-holding educational system not to take responsibility for their own actions." The prime responsibility surely rests with "devotees of . . . customer-driven education . . . [,] enrollment-maximizing educational administrators" who foster the atmosphere in which "a faculty member must exert near Herculean effort to make the necessary accommodations to ensure that students are happy" and in which "faculty members were reluctant to uphold grading standards because they believed they wouldn't be supported by administrators when push came to shove." "The teachers . . . were going easy on students because they were afraid for their jobs. That's how grade inflation had become institutionalized, and virtually nobody was willing to acknowledge this ."

Blame surely also attaches, as is so unhappily usual in academic life, to faculties that will not stand up to administrators. Perhaps the strongest argument against the assertion that tenure safeguards academic freedom may be the empirical fact that tenured full professors are no more willing than neophyte instructors to state important truths unwelcome to administrations. Meanwhile, Peter Sacks deserves the thanks of professors, school teachers, and our whole society for seeking to have us acknowledge what we have jointly, though unintentionally, wrought.

Current Culture and the Court

UNITED STATES REPORTS, Volume 517: CASES ADJUDGED IN THE SUPREME COURT AT OCTOBER TERM, 1995. *U.S. Government Printing Office.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH D. BECKER

In December 1790, a brand new United States Supreme Court of six justices moved from the second floor of the Royal Exchange Building in New York to temporary quarters in the State House, Philadelphia, the new seat of government. For Alexander J. Dallas, a Philadelphia editor, the move was most welcome. With the practice of King's Bench in mind, he conceived the publication of a series of volumes of Supreme Court opinions to be known eponymously as "1 Dallas," "2 Dallas," etc. But the Court had little to do in 1790–91, and Dallas, apparently unwilling to postpone the debut of his proud series, simply filled his first volume with decisions of the *Pennsylvania* courts. The opinions of Chief Justice Jay and his brethren consequently appear for the first time, oddly, in "2 Dallas."

Dallas's successors followed his nominative system until 1874, when the series was continued as "United States Reports," printed under government auspices. There are now more than five hundred such volumes. The most

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recent collection of cases, covering the Court's term that began in October 1995, is at hand. (The West Publishing Company duplicates the cases as Volume 116 *Supreme Court Reporter.*) The book tells us a great deal about the Court and the country.

In the 1995–96 term, 6,611 cases were disposed of, a not unusual number. Of these, only 79 were given full opinion treatment. These confirm a remarkable fact: American democracy has granted immense power to an unelected committee of nine intellectualized lawyers, an "elite class" (according to Justice Scalia). Consider just three issues disposed of during the October 1995 Term:

•in *Romer v. Evans*, the Court struck down an amendment to a state constitution, adopted in a statewide referendum, that would have denied to homosexuals the right to government protection from discrimination;

•in *U.S. v. Virginia*, the Court held that Virginia violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment by excluding women from the Virginia Military Institute without providing them equivalent education; and,

•in the *Colorado Republican* case, the Court voided, as a violation of the First Amendment, a provision of the Federal Election Campaign Act that limited the amount a political party could spend in support of congressional candidates.

Each of these issues—the rights of homosexuals, the demands of feminism, the control of big money in politics—is now at the center of the nation's politics. Other democracies might leave their resolution to normal political processes, but the American polity surrenders responsibility to Chief Justice Rehnquist's select committee. We do so in the belief that the Court is cabined by a written Constitution that constrains the private impulses of the Justices, that transforms these men and women into instruments of higher purpose. That belief is currently under heavy fire.

Consider, again, *Romer v. Evans*, which nullified a Colorado constitutional amendment withdrawing from homosexuals the right to claim discrimination. The only relevant federal constitutional norm declares that a state may not deny to any person the "equal protection of the laws." The Fourteenth Amendment

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lacks the precision of a speed limit, but a bundle of prior decisions furnished standards under which six Justices could hold that the Colorado provision "classifies homosexuals not to further a proper legislative end but to make them unequal to everyone else. . . . A State cannot so deem a class of persons a stranger to its laws." Justice Scalia, dissenting, saw the position differently. Unable to distinguish the case from a 1986 decision of the Court permitting the states to criminalize homosexual conduct, he observed:

> The Court has mistaken a Kulturkampf for a fit of spite. [The amendment] is rather a modest attempt . . . to preserve traditional sexual mores, against the efforts of a politically powerful minority to revise those mores through use of the laws. . . . Since the Constitution of the United States says nothing about this subject, it is left to be resolved by normal democratic means, including the democratic adoption of provisions in state constitutions.

The resonances of "Kulturkampf" are strong. That struggle between Bismarck and the Catholic Church of his day has a modern parallel in the growing confrontation between the Court and American religionists of the right. *Romer v. Evans*, in particular, is pointed to by the unforgiving Robert Bork and the editors of *First Things* (November 1996) as proof that we are "ruled by an oligarchy," that "our country is being radically altered, step by step, by Justices who are not following any law," and that the papal encyclical declaring that "laws and decrees enacted in contravention of the moral order, and hence of the divine will, can have no binding force in conscience" permits civil disobedience of such decisions. Were the issues less serious, the contention would be derisory. Historical perspective is helpful. In 1788, the pseudonymous Brutus, an opponent of ratification of the Constitution, said of the Supreme Court, "I question whether the world ever saw . . . a court of justice invested with such immense powers [whose Justices would] feel themselves independent of Heaven itself." A modern Brutus would be equally mistaken.

Justice Scalia's "Kulturkampf" rings another bell: the struggle was not among the voters of Colorado merely; it plainly took place within the Court itself and was more crucial to the split of opinion, and deeper, than any technical question of constitutional interpretation. At the interpretive level, however, Scalia begs the question. Of course the Constitution "says nothing about this subject," just as it says nothing about separate-but-equal schools for blacks, the privacy of the marital bedroom, and numerous other matters subsumed under its textual vagaries by decisional law. At bottom, what is going on inside the Court is an ethico-political conflict in legal disguise.

The Virginia Military Institute case also has drawn fire. About this seven-to-one decision, concurred in even by Chief Justice Rehnquist, former Judge Bork permits himself to say (in the same issue of the journal *First Things*): "An outlaw is a person who coerces others without warrant in law. That is precisely what a majority of the present Supreme Court does."

If the Commonwealth of Virginia had proved that excluding women from VMI was in furtherance of a state policy of diversity in education, the State would probably have prevailed under the precedents, for the Court recognizes that single-sex education can be beneficial. It was pretty clear that the VMI Board of Visitors was not driven by that pedagogical concern when it tried to preserve the old tradition of the Institute of not admitting women. There was, then, ample justification—in a country with a living Constitution that has slowly come to understand that gender discrimination can approach racial discrimination in its iniquity—for the holding that Virginia denied women equal protection of the laws.

Doctrinal struggles within the Court are not new, of course. Holmes said, "We are very quiet there [at the Court], but it is the quiet of a storm center." From its earliest days, the Court has not been a monolith; dissenting and specially concurring opinions appear even in the Court's eighteenth-century reports. In recent decades, however, the lines of division have been finely drawn. The 1995–96 yield includes a bushel of cases decided by a dizzying array of opinions, with highly particularized concurrences and dissents. The *Colorado Republican* case is an example of many; the opinions of the Court are introduced as follows:

> BREYER, J., announced the judgment of the Court and delivered an opinion in which O'CONNOR and SOUTER, JJ., joined. KEN-

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NEDY, J., filed an opinion concurring in the judgment and dissenting in part, in which REHNQUIST, C.J., and SCALIA, J., joined. THOMAS, J., filed an opinion concurring in the judgment and dissenting in part, in which REHNQUIST, C.J., and SCALIA, J., joined as to Parts I and III. STEVENS, J., filed a dissenting opinion, in which GINSBURG, J., joined.

These multiplex, ad hoc alliances hardly strengthen the Court: they feed the suspicion that lawmaking by the Supreme Court is free of the customary restraints imposed on judges by relevant text, judicial precedents, and traditional modes of analysis and is merely a process for giving vent to personal preference; they cast doubt on the precedential force of the Court's holdings, which become discoverable only by most careful nose counting; and they feed the fires of people looking for confirmation that the Court is lawless. Because the effectiveness of the Court is dependent on public respect for its integrity, such judicial fission is injurious. It is a question whether the struggle, in plain view, may be seen as an expression of a mature, candid, peculiarly American spirit, preferable to the pretense of perfect, Olympian unanimity found in Continental judicial utterance.

With this disunity has come a loss of verbal piquancy. It was also Bismarck who said that "no man should see how laws or sausages are made," but we now see too plainly how Supreme Court opinions are made—*see* Bernard Schwartz, *Decision* (Oxford 1996)—and can guess why the 1995–96 opinions are not belles lettres: the formation and reformation of alliances demands the softening of strongly held views, and the growing practice of turning over to law clerks the writing of opinions yields an ersatz product. It was the pride of Justice Brandeis that the Justices were "almost the only people in Washington who do their own work." That produced memorable material: "Three generations of imbeciles are enough" (Holmes, J., in *Buck v. Bell*); "We are not final because we are infallible, but we are infallible only because we are final" (Jackson, J., concurring in *Brown v. Allen*); "One who belongs to the most vilified and persecuted minority in history is not likely to be insensible to the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution. . . . But as judges we are neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Catholic nor agnostic" (Frankfurter, J., dissenting in *West Virginia*

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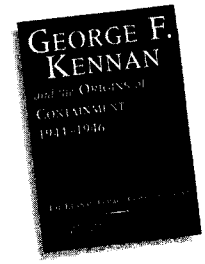

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State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette). Young law clerks are unlikely to produce this stuff.

We may be grateful that discord among the Justices is muted in one department of constitutional law: the protection of free expression under the First Amendment. Largely developed in this century from jumped-up dissents by Holmes, there is little debate among Justices on the core principle that government must give political expression the widest berth. The "Pentagon Papers" case (1971) is the celebrated modern instance.

The Court has even embraced commercial advertising as a protégé of the First Amendment; this voluble form of expression, characteristic of our time, is greeted with ambivalence by many. The history of the subject begins on the other foot: common law and early statutes were regulatory, concerned to ensure that advertising was accurate. Not until the mid-1970s did the Court recognize that the obverse of the public interest in truthful advertising was the protection of honest commercial messages from state control. In 1996, in the *44 Liquormart* case, attention was concentrated on Rhode Island's prohibition of retail advertising of the price of alcoholic beverages, apparently as a temperance measure, a purpose generally within the powers of a state. Without dissent, but on diverse theories, the Supreme Court voided the ban. The Court's center turned on the absence of proof that prohibiting advertising—a form of speech—would significantly limit alcohol consumption; further, alternatives to the regulation of speech inoffensive to the First Amendment (minimum prices, perhaps) were available. In the circumstances, Rhode Island must bow to the First Amendment.

While the decision may be applauded by First Amendment buffs, others may wonder. Significantly, the multiple opinions (excepting Justice Thomas's) do not suggest that commercial speech should enjoy the same, high degree of protection as political speech. That leaves open the possibility, welcomed by many, that legislatures may regulate sensibly the advertising of cigarettes to teenagers (among other commercial messages). First Amendment theory, it can be argued, permits the distinction, for free political expression is linked to individual self-fulfillment; commercial speech is not.

The Court's opinions are instructive about the current mores of the country, even when great political issues are not at stake. In *BMW v. Gore,* Dr. Gore paid more than $40,000 to a Birmingham dealer for a new BMW that had been repainted to cover damage sustained during transit from Germany. BMW concealed the paint job. When he discovered it, Gore sued. The Alabama jury awarded him *$4,000,000 in punitive damages* for "gross, oppressive, or malicious fraud." (Punitive damages are an old remedy to punish outrageous conduct outside a criminal proceeding.) The Alabama courts halved the award, but that was not enough; the Supreme Court sent the case back for a new trial, holding that under the Due Process Clause "elementary notions of fairness . . . dictate that a person receive fair notice not only of the conduct that will subject him to punishment but also of the severity of the penalty that a state may impose." That is not a startling proposition. It is the jury verdict that is astonishing; it tells us something about our times. What was involved here, surely, was the American passion and anxiety about transactions in automobiles, inflamed by the presence as a defendant of a giant German manufacturer of a dream car. That is enough to make the ordinary juror merciless.

Dr. Gore's case is an instance of a number of others decided by the Court in 1995–96 that were cast up by national preoccupations. The country's marked interest in psychotherapy is reflected in another, *Jaffee v. Redmond.*

Mary Lu Redmond was a police officer who, in the line of duty, shot and killed Ricky Allen when he brandished a butcher knife in the pursuit of another man. A threatening crowd then confronted Redmond. The incident was traumatic for her; she required more than fifty psychotherapeutic sessions with a licensed social worker. When Allen's estate sued Redmond for using excessive force and sought access to the psychotherapist's notes in order to cross-examine Redmond, she resisted on the ground that the notes were as confidential and privileged as would be the notes of an attorney receiving confidential disclosures from a client. That was a new proposition. The Supreme Court, in a seven-to-two decision, agreed: it recognized the privilege unconditionally, even in respect of disclosures to a social worker-psychotherapist. What is

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striking, and reflective of cultural tendencies, is the Court's acceptance of psychotherapy in any form as deserving of such protection in the teeth of a legal tradition generally opposed to the blanket exclusion of evidence.

The seventy-nine cases decided by full opinions in 1995–96 dealt, of course, with numerous other subjects: the review of administrative agency action, interpretation of the Patent Act, the effect of the Commerce Clause, the right to a jury trial in criminal cases, the problem of selective prosecution of African-Americans, prosecutorial suppression of evidence, free speech in cable television, and more. Although distinctly different in legal significance from the cases discussed above, they share the same symptomatology.

A final word about the Court's procedures: It is not widely known that, with the exception of a narrow band of exotic cases that the Court is obliged to take, the Court has absolute discretion to determine which of the thousands of cases pressing to be heard will be decided on their merits. These are products of the "rule of four": a discretionary appeal may not proceed unless four Justices are willing to hear it. In back of the rule is a mini-scandal about the Court's operations.

Because the Justices cannot read the thousands of petitions seeking review, they have delegated that immense task to their law clerks, the bright young lawyers mentioned earlier who are fresh out of law school. On the strength of the clerks' very short summaries and rather conclusive recommendations, more than 95 percent of petitions are denied. In other words, wholly inexperienced young men and women, with limited knowledge of the unresolved national issues that should engage the attention of our highest Court, are effectively deciding what the Court will hear. As a Court rule indicates, there are certain cases that the Justices wish to hear: cases of conflict between federal appeals courts, or between such a court and a state supreme court about federal law, are examples. But such cases must be "important," and it is here that mature judgment is necessary. With young law clerks calling the shots, it is likely that many important questions do not reach the Court, while other, lesser issues may become subjects of plenary disposition. The problem is old and serious and unyielding to solution.

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The Reader Replies

Heaven's Net

I always enjoy Jeremy Bernstein's writings because his elegant style and his eclecticism lead me to interesting facts. In the spirit of fact-sharing, let me correct an error in "Heaven's Net" in the Spring 1997 issue. Describing the "apparent motion of the sun, as measured in relation to the stars . . . ," Bernstein states, "At the equinoxes the sun reverses its direction." In fact it is at the summer *solstice* that the sun's apparent annual path upon the celestial "sphere" reaches its northernmost point and begins to move south, turning northward again at the winter solstice. (In the southern hemisphere the seasonal directions are the opposite.)

If you live in the country, you'll see this more clearly. City dwellers can look to the derivation of the word *solstice*: when the sun stands still—for an infinitesimally tiny time before it goes the other way.

SABRA MORTON
Lexington, Massachusetts

JEREMY BERNSTEIN replies: Needless to say, Sabra Morton is absolutely right. In re-reading what I wrote I see that it is a hopeless garble. Briefly the point is that position of the celestial pole—the point around which the stars appear to rotate every twenty-four hours—itself precesses once every 26,000 years in a small circle. We, following Copernicus, attribute this to a motion of the Earth's pole. This means that the position of the equinoxes also precesses. "Trepidation" refers to an additional motion which Tycho Brahe was the first to suggest did not exist, something that was confirmed by later astonomers, superposed on the observed precession. Pre-Copernican astronomers attributed trepidation to additional motions of the celestial spheres while Copernicus would have explained it as an additional motion of the Earth. Donne, if the poem I quoted reflects his understanding, did not seem to take this point.

Altar Boy

I delighted in Brian Doyle's essay "Altar Boy" in the Spring 1997 SCHOLAR as I delight in the discipline he so lovingly detailed.

Few women (except religious, in convents) serve as "altar Boys." But for twenty-six years, I have followed this calling in my Episcopal church, and I have trained a generation of young men and women to its art.

Moving from novice to Master Acolyte to Acolyte Master to Master of Ceremonies for major feasts, I have had my embarrassments: one involved high heels ("never wear heels" I instruct my girls); and one at a Bishop's Consecration, when an Orthodox prelate refused to process anywhere in my vicinity, and the whole order of the ceremonial had to be altered.

Today, joyfully and devoutly, I continue as the oldest living, cigar-smoking, female acolyte in the Diocese of Nebraska.

NANCY G. WESTERFIELD
Kearney, Nebraska

Brian Doyle's "Altar Boy" was most refreshing and heartfelt. It served to send me back in time to ponder the inexplicable mystery and ritual that I had the privilege to serve, as did my five brothers. And, yes, I still sit after mass to this day to contemplate and listen to the silence, bathed in the muted light of stained glass . . . then, somewhat reluctantly, push forward into the light of a new day, illuminated.

MICHAEL CRIBBS
Seattle, Washington

Haggin

Reading William Youngren's evocation of Bernard Haggin (Winter 1997) was like knowing Haggin himself, a pleasure alloyed with pain. I

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attribute my thirty-year friendship with that bristling personality not to my tactfulness but to the facts that I was not a music or a dance critic, I was not a close friend—my wife and I saw him three or four times a year on visits to New York and he was once briefly a house guest; and finally, when Bernard talked, I listened. The last was no hardship. Anything that Haggin said on music or ballet was worth listening to, and his complaints about his "enemies," however farfetched, were at least entertaining.

In the last years of his life, we drifted apart, but this, I say sadly, was my doing. The problem was that his critical judgment began to falter, and I knew that if I so much as hinted at that, our friendship would end. At the same time, silence also seemed a disservice. At any rate, I failed to protest intemperate remarks about the work of Arlene Croce, a superb dance critic though fully as opinionated as Haggin. And when he wrote that he was made uncomfortable by black operatic singers in roles that did not call for them to be black, I did not write: Bernard, when an aging horse-faced diva portrays a beautiful younger woman, do you object to that incongruity? I did write to praise a book on the making of "Mozartiana." But on receiving his cold, curt reply, "I learned nothing from this book," I did not respond that his indifference did not necessarily prevent others, including myself, from finding it insightful and informative.

One day, Virginia Hardman, who had introduced my wife and me to Haggin, said, "You should see Bernard." I knew he was ailing, but I did not know he was dying. Or perhaps I did know it but did not know how to deal with his confronting his last, intractable enemy. So I did not see Haggin in his final years. Hence the pain on reading Youngren's memoir, which, however, reminded me—hence the pleasure—of how much I had enjoyed his friendship and how profoundly his writing had educated my responses to music and ballet.

DAVID GOLDKNOPF
New Paltz, New York

When Did Modern Science Begin?

Professor Edward Grant's essay in the Winter 1997 AMERICAN SCHOLAR "When Did Modern Science Begin?" calls valuable attention to the contribution of the late medieval universities to early modern science. The universities of medieval Western Europe created a place for the exercise of reason, refined it to a high degree, and did so with the support of the surrounding civilization and its Church.

Professor Grant underlines the relative autonomy of the new academic peer groups, who with the help of Aristotle used reason to ask new questions. But Church leaders did not only acquiesce in academic Aristotelianism because they shared it; they shared it, as Professor Grant notes, because they thought that Aristotle provided a viable framework for Christian belief. It was the extent to which Christian belief depended on Aristotle by the 1600s that made the challenge of early modern science such a shock. What is interesting about the late Middle Ages is not only the extent to which natural philosophy had created a niche from which science could grow, but also the extent to which Western Christianity had identified with natural philosophy in turn.

As Professor Grant further notes, the pursuit of exact knowledge in general and the study of Aristotle in particular were constrained in other cultures not so much by the absence of academic institutions as by countervailing ideas. The universities of medieval Western Europe expressed a deeper intellectual tendency on the part of European civilization that we have yet fully to understand. The medieval universities were as much the creation of this tendency as contributors to it. But there is no doubt that the acceleration of European science owed its impetus to the academic achievements of the late medieval centuries. Professor Grant makes an eloquent case for studying European history in a more unified way.

DAVID BILLINGTON, JR.
Santa Monica, California

Asked, Galileo would probably have agreed with Edward Grant's thesis in "When Did Modern Science Begin?" about the origins of European science in the Middle Ages and among the Greeks. But, when Dr. Grant implies that nothing unusual happened in the seventeenth century and claims to be "unaware of any methodological change that proved to be significant for the Scientific Revolution," he is less likely to have gained Galileo's assent. Alfred North Whitehead is one of many whose view of the seventeenth century Scientific Revolution is antipodal to Dr. Grant's:

"Since a babe was born in a manger, it may be doubted whether so great a thing has happened with so little stir."

Our use of the word *science* in so many disparate meanings has misled others than Dr. Grant. Only the "methodological change" introduced by Galileo creates the reliable knowledge that has helped to separate the Industrial World by so

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vast a chasm of material well-being from the non-Industrial World. Galilean science should be denoted by a different word and nothing remotely like it existed at all before Galileo. He recognized that and wrote:

"what I consider more important [than any other discovery I have made] there have been opened up to this . . . excellent science, of which my work is merely the beginning, *ways and means* by which other minds more acute than mine will explore its most remote corners." (emphasis mine)

Among those other than Alfred North Whitehead who would agree with Galileo were Max Born, Herbert Butterfield, and Ernst Mach. The "science" discussed by Dr. Grant, practiced before the late sixteenth century, was not based on experiments and did not create reliable knowledge. For Mach, Galileo originated the scientific method:

"But . . . only Galileo investigated the motion of falling experimentally [and only then] . . . uniformly accelerated motion . . . appear in a purely quantitative form."

Max Born agreed:

"What is this new philosophy? I do not think it can be traced back before Galileo and Newton."

Herbert Butterfield is generally believed to have originated the term "Scientific Revolution" in his highly successful 1949 book—*Origins of Modern Science.*

"[The Scientific Revolution] outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes, mere internal displacements, within the system of medieval Christendom."

Unwittingly Dr. Grant is part of a widespread failure (often witting) to understand Galilean science properly; Galilean science is our only source of reliable knowledge. When knowledge is gained by Galileo's *"ways and means,"* it is permanent. Thomas Kuhn wrote a famous book that added to the erroneous interpretation. Kuhn never understood why Galilean science was so saliently different; he wrote about scientific revolutions—in the plural. Kuhn claimed that:

"Each [scientific revolution] . . . necessitated the community's rejection of one time-honored scientific theory in favor of another incompatible with it."

Like Dr. Grant, Kuhn too is unaware of the substantial "methodological change that proved to be significant for the Scientific Revolution"—Galilean "ways and means." The shift to experimentalism—which "outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes"—goes unmentioned in his book. The book offers several interesting examples of "paradigm changes" which did require that previous "scientific" (non-Galilean) beliefs be rejected. However, not one of his examples of rejected beliefs was based on Galileo's "ways and means."

As a brief addendum, Dr. Grant's phrase "exact sciences (primarily mathematics, astronomy, and optics)" also adds to the confusion. European mathematics has made its own considerable contribution to creating the chasm. But mathematics is deductive, not a science; Galilean science is always inductive. Furthermore, Galilean science offers averages with predictable variances; it is not "exact." No repeated experiment will give you exactly the same answer if your instrumentation is precise enough. We do not expect that no children vaccinated against measles will get it anyway; we expect that only a few will, the failures statistically predictable within a range.

JOHN E. CONNOR
Department of Economics
Villanova University
Villanova, Pennsylvania

EDWARD GRANT replies: As I read Mr. Connor's letter, he criticizes two statements that appear in my article. Since the two statements occur at the beginning of the same paragraph, I shall quote the relevant text on p. 109, col. 1:

"If we leave medicine aside, science in the Middle Ages is appropriately divisible into two parts: the exact sciences (primarily mathematics, astronomy, and optics) and natural philosophy. Although the Latin Middle Ages preserved the major texts of the exact sciences in mathematics, astronomy, and optics, and even added to their sum total, I am unaware of any methodological or technical changes that proved to be significant for the scientific revolution."

Mr. Connor's major criticism is simply based on a gross misreading of my text. I say only that scholars in the Middle Ages who did astronomy, or optics, or mathematics did not contribute to "any methodological or technical changes that proved to be significant for the scientific revolution." That assertion denies something to the Middle Ages, but cannot be construed as deny-

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ing or affirming anything about Galileo. It has nothing to do with Galileo.

Mr. Connor's "brief addendum," in which he insists that "mathematics is deductive, not a science," would be met with astonishment by his favorite scientist, Galileo. Aristotle classified mathematics as a theoretical science and I know of no one who disagreed with him in the ancient, medieval, and early modern periods to 1700. I would be surprised if contemporary mathematicians do not regard their discipline as a science.

Contrary to Mr. Connor's claims, although Galileo played a significant role in the establishment of the scientific revolution, he did not produce a new methodology, and he was far from the first to devise experiments. Galileo grappled with many of the same problems that had occupied his medieval and ancient predecessors, only he did so with far greater skill, insight, and daring, and with much greater consistency and success. In so doing, he was instrumental in transforming physical science. Although he was a greater scientific genuis than almost all of his contemporaries, he was nonetheless heir to a long tradition in natural philosophy and the exact sciences, some of which proved quite useful. That Galileo was able to determine what was significant in the natural philosophy and science of his day and what was not is another sign of true genius.

The American Boarding School

In "The Strange Fate of the American Boarding School" (Autumn 1996 AMERICAN SCHOLAR) David V. Hicks's criticism of the American boarding school is that it does not meet the challenge of contemporary culture. He finds in contemporary culture: "leveling and conformist forces" (p. 529), an "egalitarian myth" (p. 529), a "modern hybrid" (p. 530), "deconstructed boarding schools" (p. 531), the "fragmenting effect of descriptive developmental theories that have replaced the prescriptive moral aims of an earlier time" (p. 532), and schools that are "what Josiah Royce called 'a heap of separate selves'" (p. 532). The schools and their constituents have allowed this condition "for essentially selfish reasons" (p. 532). His negative view of contemporary American culture is echoed by repeated criticisms of alumni/ae, students, parents, staff (both junior and senior), and by implication the trustees or directors who are responsible for the schools.

But nothing is gained by grieving for a mythical golden age of "prescriptive moral aims." If it were a matter of prescribing, the world would not be the one we live in. And nothing is to be gained by blaming the victim(s). If the world is anything like Hicks's gloomy picture, no one needs help more than the young people. The poverty of Hicks's solution appears not only in his nostalgia for "prescriptive moral aims," but in his proposal to "give . . . students a vision of how society should work." If we could agree on how society should work, we should be well on the way to realizing it.

But not many people are listening anymore. More accurately, they are not listening to people who hawk the same old wares of promptness, neatness, politeness, obedience, good manners. Hicks speaks of "the inconvenient communal demands of collaboration and compromise with one's peers or of accountability and obedience to school authorities." (p. 532) Young people will not pay much heed to adults who talk about "virtue" and, in the eyes of the young people, conduct and profit from and enjoy a culture in which with comparative impunity one can lie and cheat and steal and distort justice and fight wars and use sex for advertising and get rich while the poor get poorer and drink and so on. Don't tell them how society *should* work; show them how it *does* work and *why* it works thus and *how* they can take part in it in ways that give true satisfaction. They are as interested in finding and leading a decent life, even in being "good," as anyone else is or ever was.

The final note, however, is one of grave doubt. Hicks says that there are "truths much deeper than the egalitarian myth—to wit, that all men and women strive for superiority, not equality" (p. 529). There seems to be a hard streak in moral reformers, not always concealable. It may be too much to expect tolerance, but unless those who would make changes are willing—and able—to negotiate, history shows they produce more pain than "wellness."

The real problems for independent schools are to generate a theory of educational independence that will justify the cost and to integrate their work with other elements of the educational enterprise. David Hicks's road leads back to a past that is no less turgid for being largely mythical.

DAVID B. BRONSON, TH.D.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

DAVID V. HICKS replies: My discussion of the boarding school's fate identified two frustrated bodies of opinion that I labeled traditional and pragmatic. For both I tried to express the sympathy I feel. Mr. Bronson appears to be a pragmatist and points out some of the weaknesses in the traditionalist position. Fair enough. There is an

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element of nostalgia and gloom hanging about this lot, but their ideals are no less appealing to many (including myself) for being no longer realizable. Ideals, as Socrates loved to argue, are worth pursuing even if they're not realizable. When indeed were they ever fully achieveable?

I wrote the article to examine what I sense are two principal reasons for the American boarding school's gentle but steady decline. It was not my intention to take a side in this debate. Perhaps I can be criticized for cowardice or inconsistency in this, yet difficult and confusing as this may seem, I suspect that the remedy will somehow address both perspectives without dismissing one in favor of the other. Mr. Bronson's letter, like others I received from those who passionately embrace one side or the other, suggests to me that I have underestimated the difficulty of trying to combine these two perspectives.

I wonder if other readers will be struck, as I was, by the curiously negative and gloomy tone of Mr. Bronson's letter—a tone for which he no doubt rightly takes me to task. What could be more negative than describing America as having "a culture in which with comparative impunity one can lie and cheat and steal and distort justice and fight wars and use sex . . ." or more gloomy than a prescription to ban all talk of "virtue" with the young? This sounds to me like the equivalent of saying that because vice is practiced in societies where virtue is praised or because the world is full of hypocrites, we should no longer urge the young to be virtuous. But all this aside, at least in tone, we may not be so far apart after all.

So far as Mr. Bronson's hopeful view of young people is concerned, I share it. After all, they've been surviving less than ideal schools for many generations, and many of them still grow into thoughtful, independent-minded, virtuous adults. For this reason and from personal experience, I believe that they delight in talk about virtue, fairness, goodness, and all those unfashionable things (although no one likes to be admonished or preached at) and that they want and need the company of adults who are not shy about praising and expecting virtuous behavior in them and are committed to practicing the virtues they preach, perhaps at some expense in personal freedom and convenience.

Does history show that uncompromising moral reformers produce more pain than good? I know it's popular these days to say so, but history will probably show us whatever we go looking for—inquisitors or saints. We will all agree, I think, that even a cursory glance at the prophets and patriarchs, saints and charlatans of the past illustrates the difficulty of genuinely wanting and believing in the benefits of moral reform without seeming self-righteous, hypocritical, or uncompromising. It seems to me a sad commentary on our times—alas more gloom—that moral reformers and their criticisms are so generally disliked, distrusted, and dismissed, especially in the cynical subculture that many young people now inhabit, thanks in part to sentiments like those expressed in Mr. Bronson's letter, while the Madonnas and Larry Flynts of this world become its cultural heroes.

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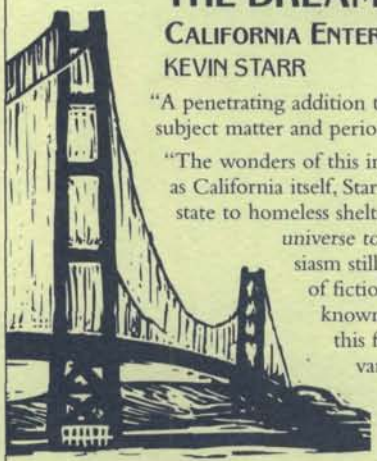

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